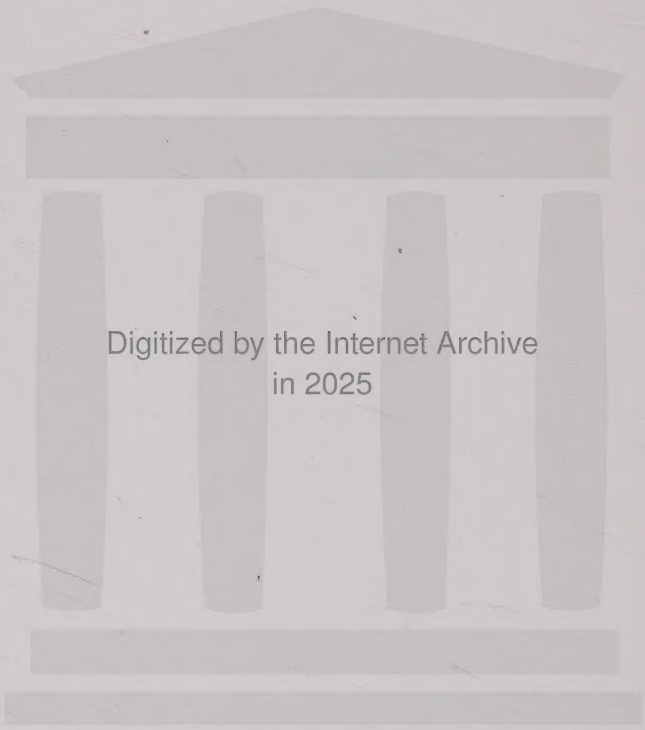
TALES from TENNYSON

To Percival

from

Aunt Annie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THREE TIMES THEY BROKE SPEARS

TALES FROM TENNYSON

BY

MOLLY K. BELLEW

EDITOR OF

"TALES FROM LONGFELLOW"

"DICKENS' CHRISTMAS STORIES FOR CHILDREN"

ETC., ETC.

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To my Young Readers.

Alfred Lord Tennyson was the typically English poet, and none, perhaps not even Shakespeare, has appealed so keenly to the human heart. No other man's poems have caused as many readers to shed tears of sympathy nor have awakened higher sentiments in the human heart. The critics agree in pronouncing him the ideal poet laureate. In his "Idylls from the King" are found the loftiest and proudest deeds of English history and even in the retelling of these in prose the high spirit that is an inspiration to the noblest deeds cannot fail to be preserved.

MOLLY K. BELLEW.

THE COMING OF KING ARTHUR.

OVER a thousand years ago everybody was talking about the wonderful King Arthur and his brilliant Knights of the Round Table, who everywhere were pursuing bold quests, putting to rout the band of outlaws and robbers which in those days infested every highway and by-way of the country, going to war with tyrannical nobles, establishing law and order among the rich, redressing the wrongs of women, the poor and the oppressed, and winning glorious renown for their valor and their successes.

That was in England which at that time was not England as it is today, all one kingdom under a single ruler, but was divided into many bits of kingdoms each with its own king and all warring against each other. Arthur's kingdom was the most unpeaceful of all. This was because for twenty years or more, ever since the death of old King Uther, the country had been without a ruler. Old King Uther had died about a score of years before without leaving an heir to the throne, and all the nobles of the realm had immediately gone to war with one another each trying to get the most land and each trying to get the throne for himself.

Suddenly, however, old Merlin, the wizard who had been King Uther's magician, appeared one day in the royal council hall with a handsome young man, Arthur, and declared him to be the king of the realm. Arthur was crowned and for a time the nobles were quiet, for he ruled with a strong hand of iron, put down all the evils in his kingdom and everywhere gave

it peace and order. People in every part of the island sent for him and his knights, begging him to come to help them out of their difficulties. But presently the nobles became troublesome again; they said that Arthur was not the true king, that he was not the son of Uther and that, therefore, he had no right to reign over them. So there was fighting and unrest again, and in the midst of it Leodogran, the king of the Land of Cameliard, asked Arthur to come with his knights and drive away the enemies besetting him on every side. The country of Cameliard had gone to waste and ruin, because of the continual warfare that was waged with the kings that lived in the little neighboring countries and a mass of wild-eyed foreign heathen peoples who invaded the land. And so it happened that Cameliard was ravaged with battles, its strong men were cut down with the sword and wild dogs, wolves, and bears from the tangled weeds came rooting up the green fields and wallowing into the palace gardens. Sometimes the wolves stole little children from the villages and nursed them like their own cubs, until finally these children grew up into a race of wolf-men who molested the land worse than the wolves themselves. Then another king fought Leodogran, and at last the heathen hordes came swarming from over the seas

OLD MERLIN APPEARS.

and made all the earth red with his soldiers' blood, and they made the sun red with the smoke of the burning homes of his people.

Leodogran simply did not know which way to turn for help until at last he thought of young Arthur of the Round Table who recently had been crowned king. So Leodogran sent for Arthur beseeching him to come and help him, for between the men and the beasts his country was dying.

PRINCESS GUINEVERE.

King Arthur and his men welcomed the chance and went at once into the Land of Cameliard to drive away the heathen marauders. As he marched with his men past the castle walls, pretty Princess Guinevere stood outside to watch the glittering soldiers go by. Among so many richly dressed knights she did not particularly notice Arthur, for he wore nothing to show that he was king, although his kingly bearing and brave forehead might suggest leadership. But no royal arms were engraved upon his helmet

HE LED HIS WARRIORS BOLDLY.

or his shield, and he carried simple weapons not nearly so gorgeously emblazoned as those of some of the others.

Although Guinevere did not see the fair young King, Arthur spied her beside the castle wall; he felt the light of her beautiful eyes glimmering out into his heart and setting it all aflame with a fire of love for her.

He led his warriors boldly to the forests where they pitched their tents, then fought all the heathen until they scampered away to their own territories, he slew the frightful wild beasts that had plundered the fields, cut down the forest trees so as to open out roads for the people of Cameliard to pass over from one part of their land to the other, then he traveled quietly away with his men, back to fight his own battles in his own country. For there was fighting everywhere in those days. But all the time in Arthur's heart, while he was doing those wonderful things for Leodogran, he was thinking still, not of Leodogran, but of the lovely Guinevere, and yearning for her.

If only she could be his queen he thought they two together could rule on his throne as one strong, sweet, delicious life, and could exert a mighty power over all his people to make them good and wise and happy. Each day increased his love until he could not bear even to think for a moment of living without her. So from the very field of battle, while the swords were flashing and clashing about him, as he fought the barons and great lords who had risen up against him, Arthur dispatched three messengers to Leodogran, the King of Cameliard.

These three messengers were Ulfius, Brastias and Bedivere, the very first knight Arthur had knighted upon his throne. They went to Leodogran and said that if Arthur had been of any service to him in his recent troubles with the heathen and the

wild beasts, he should give the Princess Guinevere to be Arthur's wife as a mark of his good will.

Well, when they had said this, Leodogran did not know what

ARTHUR DISPATCHED THREE MESSENGERS TO LEODOGRAN.

to do any better than when the heathen and the beasts had come upon him. For while he thought Arthur a very bold solidier and a very fine man, and, although he felt very grateful indeed to him for all the great things he had done, still he was

not certain that Guinevere ought to marry him. For, as Guinevere was the daughter of a king she should become the wife of none but the son of a king. And Leodogran did not know precisely who this King Arthur was; but he did know that the barons of Arthur's court had burst out into this uproar against him because they said he was not their true king and not the son of King Uther who had reigned before him. Some of them declared him to be the child of Gerlois, and others avowed that Sir Anton was his father.

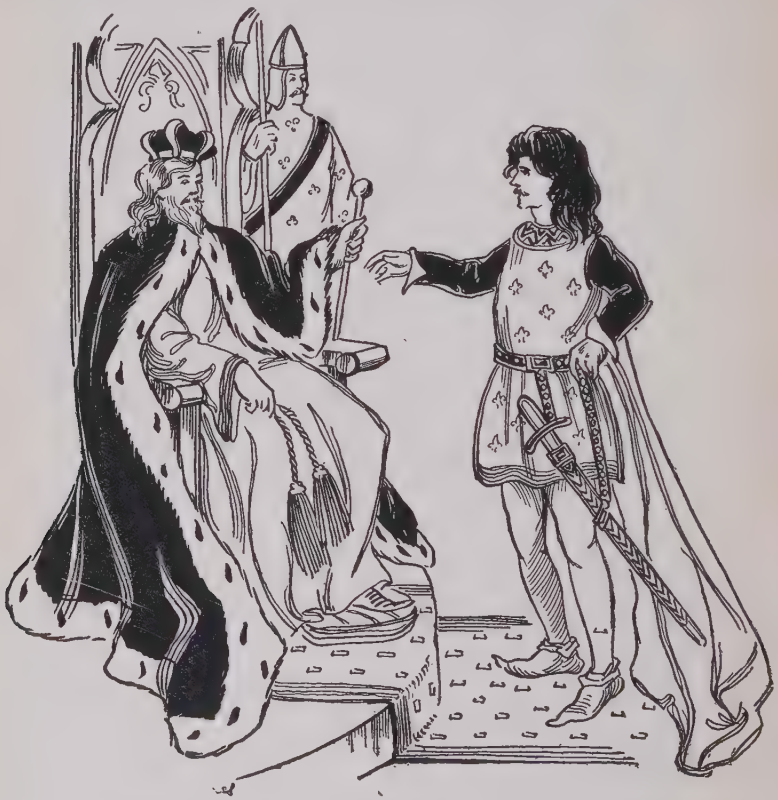
As poor, puzzled Leodogran knew nothing about the matter himself, he sent for his gray-headed trusty old chamberlain, who always had good counsel to give him in any dilemma; and he asked the chamberlain whether he had heard anything certainly as to Arthur's birth. The chamberlain told him that there were just two men in all the world who knew the truth with respect to Arthur and where he had come from, and that both these men were twice as old as himself. One of them was Merlin the wizard, the other was Bleys, Merlin's teacher in magic, who had written a book of his renowned pupil's wonders, which probably related everything regarding the secret of Arthur's birth.

"If King Arthur had done no more for me in my wars than you have just now in my present trouble," the king answered the chamberlain, "I would have died long ago from the wild beasts and the heathen. Send me in Ulfius and Brastias and Bedivere again."

So the chamberlain went out and Arthur's three men came into Leodogran who spoke to them this way: "I have often seen a big cuckoo chased by little birds and understood why such tiny birds plagued him so, but why are the nobles in your country rebelling against their king and saying that he

is not the son of a king. Tell me whether you yourselves think he is the child of King Uther."

Ulfias and Brastias answered immediately "yes," but Bedivere, the first of all Arthur's knights, became very bold when anyone slandered his sovereign and he replied: "*Sir*



SIR KING, THERE ARE ALL SORTS OF STORIES ABOUT THAT.

King, there are all sorts of stories about that; some of the nobles hate him just because he is good and they are wicked; they cry out that he is no man because his ways are gentler than

their rough manners, while others again think he must be an angel dropped from heaven. But I will tell you the facts as I know them, King Uther and Gerlois were rivals long ago; they both loved Ygerne. And she was the wife of Gerlois and had no sons, but three daughters, one of them the Queen of Orkney who has clung to Arthur like a sister. The two rivals, Gerlois and Uther went to war with each other and Gerlois was killed in battle; then Uther quickly married the winsome Ygerne, the widow of Gerlois, for he loved her dearly and impatiently. In a few months Uther died, and on that very night of his death Arthur was born. And as soon as he was born they carried him out by a secret back gateway to Merlin the magician, to be brought up far away from the court so that no one would hear about him until he was grown up ready to sit upon Uther's, his father, throne.

"For those were wild lords in those years just like these of today, always struggling for the rule, and they would have shattered the helpless little prince to pieces had they known about him. So Merlin took the baby and gave him over to old Sir Anton, a friend of Uther's, and Sir Anton's wife tended Arthur with her own little ones so that nobody knew who he was or where he had come from. But while the prince was growing up the kingdom went to weed; the great lords and barons were fighting all the time among themselves and nobody ruled. But during this present year Arthur's time for ascending the throne had come, so Merlin brought him from out of his hiding place, set him in the palace hall and cried out to all the lords and ladies, 'This is Uther's heir, your king!' Of course, none of them would have that. A hundred voices cried back immediately: 'Away with him! he is no king of ours, that's the son of Gerlois, or else the child of Anton, and no king.'

In spite of this opposition Merlin was so crafty and clever he won the day for the people, who were clamoring for a king and were glad to see Arthur crowned. But after it all was over the lords banded together and broke out in open war against Arthur. That is the whole story of this war."

Although pleased with Bedivere's good account of Arthur, yet when it was ended Leodogran scarcely felt satisfied. Was Bedivere right, he thought to himself, or were the barons right? As he sat pondering over everything in his palace, *three great visitors came to the castle;* these were the Queen of Orkney, the daughter of Gerlois and Ygerne, with her two sons, Gawain and Modred. Leodogran made a great feast for them and while entertaining them at table remembered what Bedivere had said about Arthur and this queen. So he turned to the queen and remarked:

THREE VISITORS TO THE CASTLE.

"An insecure throne is no better than a mass of ice in a summer's sea; it all melts away. You are from Arthur's court; tell me, do you think this king with his few loyal Knights of the Round Table can triumph over the rebellious lords, and keep his throne?"

"O King, they are few indeed," the Queen of Orkney cried, "but so bold and true, and all of one mind with him. I was there at the coronation when the savage yells of the nobles died away, and Arthur sat crowned upon the dais with all his knights gathered round him to do his service for him forever. Arthur in low, deep tones, with simple words of great authority bound them to him with such wonderfully rigid vows that when they rose from their knees one after the other, some of them looked as pale as if a ghost had passed by them, others were flushed in their faces, and yet others seemed dazed and blind with their awe as if not fully awake. Then he spoke to them, cheering them with divine words that are far more than my tongue can ever tell you, and while he spoke every face flashed, for just a moment with his likeness, and from the crucifix above, three rays in green, blue, scarlet, streamed across upon the bright, sweet faces of the three tall fair queens, his friends who stood silently beside his throne, and who will always be ready to help him if he is in need.

"Merlin, the magician, came there too, with his hundred years of art like so many hands of vassals to wait upon the young king. Near Merlin stood the mystical, marvelous Lady of the Lake, who knows a deeper magic than Merlin's own, dressed in white. A mist of incense curled all about her and her face was fairly hidden in the dim gloom But when the holy hymns were sung a voice like flowing waters sounded through the music. It was the voice of the Lady of the Lake who lives in the lowest waters of the lake where it is always calm, no matter what storms may blow over the earth and who when the waves tumble and roll above her can walk out upon their crests just as our Lord did.

"*It was she who gave Arthur his remarkable sword* Excalibur,

with its hilt like a cross wherewith he drove away the heathen for you. That strange sword rose up from out the bosom of the lake, and Arthur rowed over in a little boat and took it. The sword is incrusted with rich jewels on the hilt, with a blade so bright that men are blinded by it. On one side the words 'Take me' are graven upon it in the oldest language of the world, while on the other side the words 'Cast me away' are carved in the tongue that you speak.

SHE GAVE ARTHUR HIS REMARKABLE SWORD.

"Arthur became very sad when he saw the second inscription, but Merlin advised him to take the beautiful blade and use it; he told him that now was the time to strike and that the time to cast away was very, very far off. So Arthur took the tremendous sword and with it he will beat down his enemies, King Leodogran."

Leodogran was pleased with the queen's words, but he wished to test the story Bedivere had told him, so he looked into her eyes narrowly as he observed, with a question in his tones, "The swallow and the swift are very near kin, but you

are still closer to this noble prince as you are his own dear sister."

"I am the daughter of Gerlois and Ygerne," she answered.

"Yes, that is why you are Arthur's sister," the king returned still questioningly.

"These are secret things," the Queen of Orkney replied, and she motioned with her hand for her two sons to leave her alone in the room with the king.

Gawain immediately skipped away singing, his hair flying after and frolicked outside like a frisky pony, *but cunning Modred laid his ear close beside the door to listen*, so that he half heard all the strange story his mother told the king. This is what the queen said in the beginning to the king.

NNING MODRED BESIDE THE DOOR TO LISTEN

"What should I know about it? For my mother's hair and eyes were dark, and so were the eyes and hair of Gerlois, and Uther was dark too, almost black, but the King Arthur is fairer than anyone else in Britain. However, I remember how my mother used often to weep and say, 'O that you had some brother, pretty little one, to guard you from the rough ways of the world."

"Yes? She said that?" Leodogran rejoined, "but when did you see Arthur first?"

"O king, I will tell you all about it," cried the Queen of Orkney. "Once when I was a little bit of a girl and had been

beaten for some childish fault that I had not committed, I ran outside and flung myself on a grassy bank and hated all the world and everything in it, and wished I were dead. But all of a sudden little Arthur stood by my side. I don't know how he came or anything about it. Perhaps Merlin brought him, for Merlin, they say, can walk about and nobody see him, if he will, but any rate, Arthur was there by my side, comforting me and drying my tears. After that Arthur came very often without anybody knowing it and we were children together, and in those golden days I felt sure he would be king.

"But now I must tell you about Bleys, the old wizard who taught the magician Merlin. You know they both served King Uther, and just a little while ago when Bleys died he sent for me. He said he had something to tell me that I must know before he left the world. He said that they two, Merlin and he, sat beside the bed of King Uther on the night when the king passed away, moaning and wailing because he left no heir to his throne. After the king's death as Merlin and Bleys walked out from the castle walls into the dismal misty night, they saw a wonderful fairy-ship shaped like a winged dragon sailing the heavens, with shining people collected on its decks; but in the twinkling of an eye the ship was gone.

"Then Merlin and Bleys passed down into the cove by the seashore to watch the billows, one after the other, as they lapped up against the beach. And as they looked at last a great wave gathered up one-half of the ocean and came full of voices, slowly rising and plunging, roaring all the while. Then all the wave was in a flame; and down in the wave and in the flame they saw lying a naked babe that was carried by the water to Merlin's very feet.

"'The king!' cried Merlin. 'Here's an heir for Uther.'

"Then as old Merlin spoke the fringe of that terrible great flaming breaker lashed at him as he held up the baby; it rose up round him in a mantle of fire so that he and the child were clothed in fire. Then suddenly there was a calm, the stars looked out and the sky was open.

" 'And this same child,' Bleys whispered to me, 'is the young king who reigns. And I could not die in peace unless the story had been told.' Then Bleys passed away into the land where nobody can question him.

"So I came to Merlin to ask him whether that was all true about the shining dragon-ship and the tiny bare baby floating down from heaven over on the glory of the seas; but Merlin just laughed, as he always does, and answered me in the riddles of the old song, this way:

" 'Rain, rain and sun! a rainbow in the sky!
A young man will be wiser by and by;
An old man's wit may wander ere he die.
Rain, rain and sun! a rainbow on the lea!
And truth is this to me and that to thee;
And truth or clothed or naked let it be.
Rain, sun and rain! and the free blossom blows;
Sun, rain and sun! and where is he who knows.
From the great deep to the great deep he goes!'

"It vexed me dreadfully to have Merlin be so tantalizing; but you must not be afraid, king, to give your only child Guinevere to this King Arthur. For great poets will sing of his brave deeds in long years after this; and Merlin has said, and not joking, either, that even although Arthur's enemies may wound him in battle he will never, never die, but will only pass away for a time, for a little while, and then will come to us

again. And Merlin says too, that sometime Arthur is going to trample all the heathen kings under his feet until all the nations and all the men will call him their king."

It pleased Leodogran tremendously to hear what the Queen of Orkney told him of Arthur, and when she had ended he lay thinking over it all, still puzzled as to whether he should say "yes" or "no" to the ambassadors whom Arthur had sent. As he lay buried in his thoughts he grew very, very drowsy and dreamy, and at last, he fell asleep. And while he slept he saw a wonderful vision in a dream.

There was a strange, sloping land, rising before his eyes, that ascended higher and higher, field after field, to a very great height and at the top there was a lofty peak hidden in the heavy, hazy clouds; and on the peak a phantom king stood. One moment the king was there, and the next moment he was gone, while everything below him was in a frightful confusion, a battle with swords, and the flocks of sheep and cattle falling back, and all the villages burning and their smoke rolling up in streams to the clouded pinnacle of the peak where the king stood in the fog, hiding him the more. Now and then the king spoke out through the haze, and some one here or there beneath would point upward toward him, but the rest all went on fighting. They cried out, "He is no king of ours, no son of Uther's, no king of ours." Then in a twinkling the dream all changed; the mists had quite blown away, the solid earth below the peak had vanished like a bubble and only the wonderful king remained, crowned with his diadems, standing in the heavens.

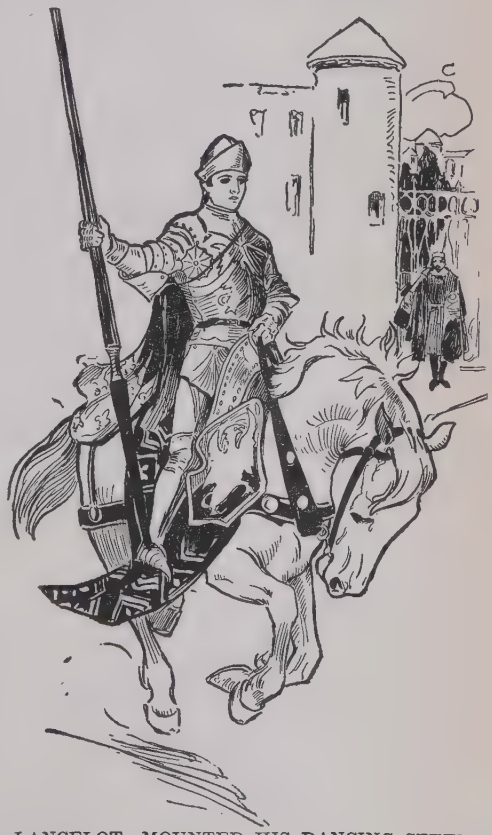
Then Leodogran while still looking at him woke from his sleep. He called for Ulfius and Brastias and Bedevere, and when they had come into this presence he told them that Arthur should

marry the fair Princess Guinevere, and he sent them galloping back to Arthur's court.

That was a joyful day for King Arthur when the three knights delivered King Leodogran's message. He made ready at once for his sweet queen. He picked out Lancelot, his favorite Knight of the Round Table, whom he loved better than any other man in all the world, to ride over into the Land of Cameliard and bring back Guinevere for his bride. And as Lancelot mounted his dancing steed and rode away *Arthur watched him from the palace gates,* thinking of the lovely lady who would ride by his side when he returned.

Lancelot's horse trampled away among the flowers; for it was April when he left the court of Arthur, and just one month later he came riding back among the flowers of the May-time. Guinevere was with him on her graceful palfrey.

Then Dubric, the head of the whole church in Britain, went out to meet her. Happy Arthur was there too. They were married in the greatest



LANCELOT MOUNTED HIS DANCING STEED.

and noblest church in the land before the stately altar, with all the Knights of the Round Table dressed in stainless white clothes, gathered about them. And all the knights were as delighted as they could be because their king was so glad.

KING ARTHUR AND THE LOVELY QUEEN.

Holy Dubric spread out his hands above the King and the lovely Queen to call down the blessings of heaven, and he said:

"Reign, King, and live and love, and make the world better, and may your queen be one with you, and may all the Knights of the Order of the Round Table fulfill the boundless purposes of their king."

There was spread a glorious marriage feast. Great lords

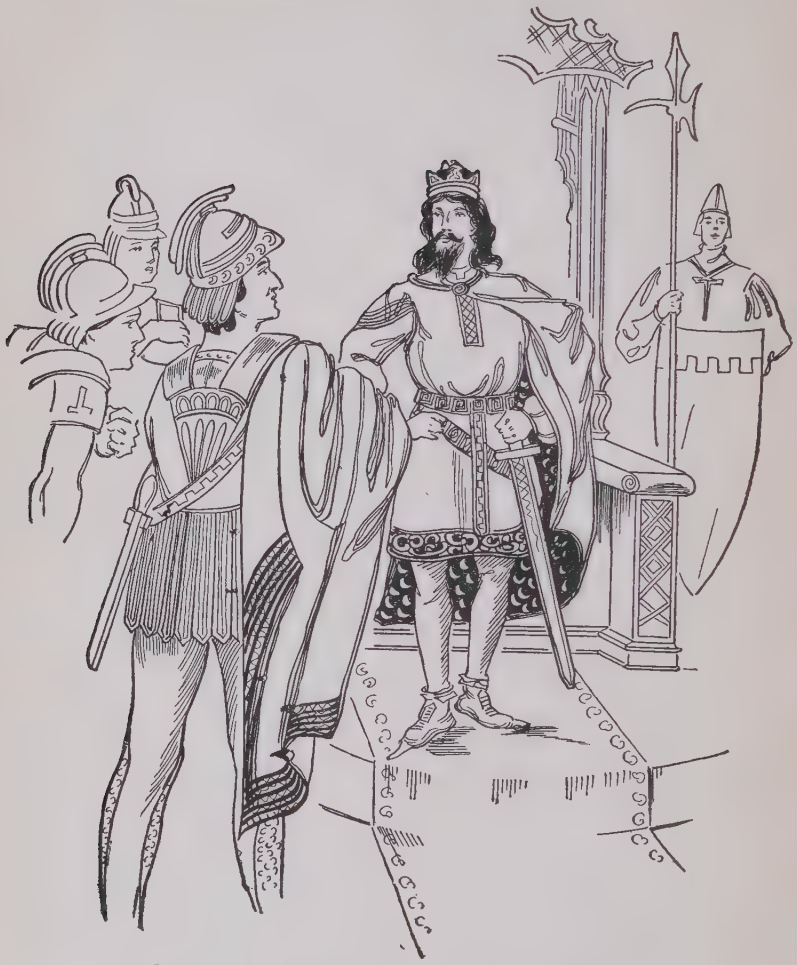
came thither from far away Rome, which once was the mistress of all the world, but now was slowly fading away. These Roman lords called for the tribute from Arthur that they had always received from Britain ever since Cæsar with his Roman legions had conquered it long years before.

But Arthur, the king and bridegroom, pointed to his snowy knights and said: "These knights of mine have sworn to fight for me in all my wars and to worship me as their king. The old order of things has passed away and a new order will take its place. We are fighting for our fair father Christ, while you have been growing so feeble and so weak and so old that you cannot even drive away the heathen from your Roman walls any more. So we will not pay tribute to you nor be your slaves. This is to be our own free country which we will defend and maintain."

The great lords from Rome drew back very angrily and went home and told their king all about what Arthur had said. So Arthur had to battle with Rome, but he won in the end.

Arthur trained his Knights of the Round Table so that they all felt like one great, vast strong man, all of one will. Thus he became mightier than any of the other kings in any part of Britain. And when he fought with them he always conquered them. In that way he drew in all the little kingdoms under him, so that he was the one king of the land, and they all fought together for him.

There were twelve great battles against the heathen hordes that had molested them from across the terrible seas, and each of these battles he won. So he made one great realm and he reigned over it, the king.



THE GREAT LORDS FROM ROME DREW BACK.

GARETH AND LYNETTE.

Old King Lot and good Queen Bellicent had three sons. Gawain and Modred were Knights of the Round Table at Arthur's court, and young Gareth, who was his mother's pet, sighed to think he had to stay home and be cuddled and fondled like a baby boy instead of riding off like a venturesome soldier fighting gloriously for the king and winning a great name.

"There!" he cried impatiently, one chilly spring day as he stood by the brink of a rivulet and saw a bit of a pine tree caught from the bank by the dashing, swollen waters of the stream and whirled madly away. "That's the way the king's enemies would fall before my spear, if I had a spear to use! That stream can do no more than I can, even although it is merely icy water all cold with the snows while I'm tingling with hot blood and have strong arms. When Gawain came home last summer and asked me to tilt with him and Modred was the judge, didn't I shake him so in his saddle that he said I had half overcome him? Humph! and mother thinks I'm still a child!"

Gareth went in to the queen and said: "Mother, if you love me listen to a story I will tell. Once there was an egg which a great royal eagle laid high above on the rocks somewhere almost out of sight and there was a lad which saw the splendor sparkling from it, and the lightnings playing around it and the little birds crying and clashing in the nest. The boy thought if he could only reach that egg he would be richer than a houseful of kings, and he was nearly driven from his sense with his desire for it. But whenever he reached to clamber up for it some one who loved him restrained him saying,

MOTHER, IF YOU LOVE ME LISTEN TO A STORY I WILL TELL.

'If you love me do not climb, lest you break your neck.' So the boy did not climb, mother, and he did not break his neck, but he broke his heart pining for the glorious egg. How can you keep me tethered here, Mother? Let me go!''

''Have you no pity for me?'' Queen Bellicent asked. ''Stay here by your poor old father and me; chase the deer in our fir trees and marry some lovely bride I will get for you. You're my best son and so young.''

''Mother, a king once showed his son two brides and told him that he must either win the beautiful one, or, if he failed, wed the other. The pretty one was Fame and the other was Shame. Why should I follow the deer when I can follow the king? Why was I born a man if I cannot do a man's work?''

''But some of the barons say he isn't the true king.''

''Hasn't he conquered the Romans and driven off the heathen and made all the people free? Who has a right to be king if not the man who has done that? He is the true king.''

When Bellicent found that she could not turn Gareth from his purpose, she said that if he was determined he must do one thing before he asked the king to make him a knight.

''Anything,'' cried Gareth. ''Give me a hundred proofs. Only be quick.''

The queen looked at him very slowly and said: ''You are a prince, Gareth, but before you are fit to serve the king you must go into Arthur's court disguised and hire yourself to serve his meats and drink among the scullions and kitchen knaves. And you must not tell your name to anyone and you must serve that way for a year and a day.''

The queen made this condition, thinking that Gareth would be too proud to play the slave. But he thought a moment, then answered: ''A slave may be free in his soul, and I can see the

jousts there. You are my mother so I must obey you and I will be a scullion in King Arthur's kitchen and keep my name a secret from everyone, even the king.''

So Bellicent grieved and watched Gareth every moment wherever he went, dreading the time when he should leave. And he waited until one windy night when she slept, then called two servants and slipped away with them, all three dressed like poor peasants of the field.

They walked away towards the south and as they came to the plain stretching to the mountain of Camelot, they saw the royal city upon its brow. Sometimes its spires and towers flashed in the sunlight; sometimes only the great gate shone out before their eyes, or again the whole fair town vanished away. Then the servants said:

''Let us go no further, Lord. It's an enchanted city, and all a vision. The people say anyway, that Arthur isn't the true king, but only a changeling from fairyland, and that Merlin won his battles for him with magic.''

Gareth laughed and replied that he had magic enough in his blood and hopes to plunge old Merlin into the Arabian sea. And he pushed them on to the gate. There was no other gate like it under heaven. The Lady of the Lake stood barefooted on the keystone and held up the cornice. Drops of water fell from either hand and above were the three queens who were Arthur's friends, and on each side Arthur's wars were pictured in weird devices with dragons and elves so intertwined that they made men dizzy to look at them. The servants cried out, ''Lord, the gateway is alive!'' Then a blast of music pealed out of the city, and the three queens stepped aside while an old man with a long beard came out and asked:

''Who are you, my sons?''

"We are peasants," answered Gareth, "who have come to see the glories of your king, but the city looked so strange through the morning mist that my men are wondering whether it is not a fairy city or perhaps no city at all. So tell us the truth about it."

"Oh, it's a fairy city," the old man answered, "and a fairy king and queen came out of the mountain cleft at sunrise with harps in their hands and built it to music, which means it never was built at all, and therefore built forever."

"Why do you mock me so?" Gareth cried angrily.

"I am not mocking you so much as you are mocking me and every one who looks at you, for you are not what you seem, still I know what you truly are."

Then the old man turned away and Gareth said to his men: "Our poor little white lie stands like a ghost at the very beginning of our enterprise. Blame my mother's love for it and not her nor me."

So they all laughed and came into the city of Camelot with its shadowy and stately palaces. Here and there a knight passed in or out, his arms clashing and the sound was good to Gareth's ears. Or out of a casement window glanced the pure eyes of lovely women. But Gareth made at once for the hall of the king where his heart fairly hammered into his ears as he wondered whether Arthur would turn him aside because of the half shadow of a lie he had told the old man by the gate about being a peasant. There were many supplicants coming before the king to tell him of some hurt done them by marauders or the wild beasts, and each one was given a knight by the king to help them.

When Gareth's turn came, he rested his arms, one on each servant, and stepped forward saying: "A boon, Sir King!

Do you see how weak I seem, leaning on these men? Pray let me go into your kitchen and serve there for a year and a day, and do not ask me my name. After that I will fight for you.''

''You are a handsome youth,'' said the king, ''and worth something better from the king, but if that is what you wish, go and serve under the seneschal, Sir Kay, Master of the Meats and Drinks.''

Sir Kay thought the boy had probably run away from the farm belonging to some Abbey where he had not had enough to eat, and he promised that if Gareth would work well he would feed him until he was as plump as a pigeon.

But Lancelot, the king's favorite, said to Kay: ''You don't understand boys as well as dogs and cattle. Can't you see by this lad's broad fair forehead and fine hands that he is nobly born? Treat him well or he may shame you.''

''Fair and fine, forsooth,'' cried Kay. ''If he had been a gentleman he would have asked for a horse and armor.''

So he hustled and harried Garreth, *set him to draw water, hew wood* and labor harder than any of the grimy and smudgy kitchen knaves. Gareth did all with a noble sort of ease and graced the lowliest act, and when the knaves all gathered together of an evening to tell stories about Arthur on the battlefields or of Lancelot in the tournament, Gareth listened delightedly or made them all, with gaping mouths, listen charmed, to some prodigious tale of his own about wonderful knights cutting their scarlet way through twenty folds of twisted dragons. When there was a Joust and Sir Kay let him attend it, he went half beside himself in an ecstacy watching the warriors clash their springing spears, and the sniffing chargers reel.

At the end of the first month, lonely Queen Bellicent felt sorry for her poor, dear son, toiling and moiling among pots and pans, so she sent a servant to Camelot with the beaming armor of a knight and freed him from his vow. Gareth colored redder than any young girl and went alone in to the king and told him all.

SET HIM TO DRAW WATER, HEW WOOD

"Make me your knight in secret," he begged Arthur, "and give me the very next quest from your court!"

"Son," answered the king, "my knights are sworn to vows of utter hardihood, of utter gentleness, of utter faithfulness in love and of utter obedience to the king."

Gareth sprang lightly from his knees: "My king, I can promise you for my hardihood; respecting my obedience, ask Sir Kay, and as for love I have not loved yet, but God willing some day I will, and faithfully."

The reply so pleased the great king, he laid his hand on Gareth's arm and smiled and knighted him.

A few days later *a noble maiden* with a brow like a May-blossom and a saucy nose *passed into the king's hall with her page* and told Arthur that her name was Lynette, and that her beautiful sister, the Lady Lyonors lived in the Castle Perilous which was beset with bandit knights.

A NOBLE MAIDEN WITH HER PAGE.

"A river courses about the castle in three loops," said she, "each loop has a bridge and every bridge is guarded by a wicked outlaw warrior, Sir Morning-star, Sir Noon-sun and Sir Evening-star, while a fourth called Death, a huge man-beast of boundless savageries, is besieging my sister in her own castle so as to break her will and make her wed with him. They are four fools," cried the maiden disdainfully, "but they are mighty men so I have come to ask for Lancelot to ride away with me to help us."

Gareth was up in a twinkling with kindled eyes. "A boon, Sir King, this quest," he cried. "I am only a knave from

your kitchen, but I can topple over a hundred such fellows. Your promise, king."

"You are rough and sudden and worthy to be a knight. Therefore go," said Arthur to the great amazement of the court.

"Fie on you, King!" exclaimed Lynette in a fury. "I asked you for your best knight, Lancelot, and you give me a slave from your kitchen," and she scampered down the aisle, leaped to her horse and flitted out of the weird white gate. "A kitchen slave!" she sputtered as she flew. "Why didn't the king send me a knight that fights for love and glory?"

Gareth in the meaintime had strode to the side doorway of the royal hall where the saw a war-horse awaiting him, the gift of Arthur and worth half the price of a town. His two servants stood by with his shield and helmet and spear. Dropping his coarse kitchen cloak to the floor, he instantly harnessed himself in his armor leaped to the back of his beautiful steed and flashed out of the gateway while all his kitchen mates threw up their caps and cried, "God bless the king and all his fellowship!"

"Maiden, the quest is mine," he said to Lynette as he overtook her, "Lead and I follow."

"Away with you!" she cried, nipping her slender nose. "You smell of kitchen grease. See there, your master is coming!'

Indeed she told the truth, for Sir Kay, infuriated with Gareth's boldness in the king's hall was hounding after them. "Don't you know me?" he shouted.

"Yes, too well," returned Gareth. "I know you to be the most ungentle knight in Arthur's court."

"Have at me, then," cried Kay, whereupon Gareth pounced

upon him with his gleaming lance and struck him instantly to the earth, then turned for Lynette and said again, "Lead and I follow."

But Lynette had hurried her galloping palfrey away and would not stop the beast until his heart had nearly burst with its violent throbbing. Then she turned and eyed Gareth as scornfully as ever. As he pranced to her side she observed:

"Do you suppose scullion, that I think any more of you now that by some good luck you have overthrown your master. You dishwasher and water-carrier, you smell of the kitchen quite as much as before."

"Maiden," Gareth rejoined gently, "Say what you will, but whatever you say, I will not leave this quest until it is ended or I have died for it."

"O, my, how the knave talks! But you'll soon meet with another knave whom in spite of all the kitchen concoctions ever brewed, you'll not dare look in the face."

"I'll try him," answered Gareth with a smile that maddened Lynette. And away she darted again far into the strange avenues of the limitless woods.

Gareth plunged on through the pine trees after her and a serving-man came breaking through the black forest crying out, "They've bound my master and are throwing him into the lake!"

"Lead and I follow," cried Gareth to Lynette, and she led, plunging into the pine trees until they came upon a hollow sinking away into a lake, where six tall men up to their thighs in reeds and bulrushes were dragging a seventh man with a stone about his neck toward the water to drown him.

Gareth sprang upon three and stilled them with his doughty blows, but three scurried away through the trees; then Gareth

loosened the stone from the gentleman and set him on his feet. He proved to be a baron and a friend of Arthur and asked Gareth what he could do to show his gratitude for the saving of his life. Gareth said he would like a night's shelter for the lady who was with him. So they rode over toward the graceful manor house where the baron lived, and as they rode he said to Gareth.

"I believe you are of the Table," meaning that Gareth was a Knight of the Round Table."

"Yes, he is of the table after his own fashion," Lynette laughed, "for he serves in Arthur's kitchen." And turning toward Gareth she added, "Do not imagine that I admire you the more for having routed these miserable cowardly foresters; any thresher with his flail could have done that."

And when they were seated at the baron's table, Gareth by Lynette's side, she cried out to their host, "It seems dreadfully rude in you, Lord Baron, to place this knave beside me. Listen to me: I went to King Arthur's court to ask for Sir Lancelot to come to help my sister, and as I ended my plea, up bawls this kitchen boy: 'Mine's the quest.' And Arthur goes mad and sends me this fellow who was made to kill pigs and not redress the wrongs of women."

So Gareth was seated at another table and the baron came to him and asked him whether it might not be better for him to relinquish his quest, but the lad replied that the king had given it to him and he would carry it through. The next morning he said again to proud Lynette, "Lead and I follow."

But the maiden responded, "We are almost at the place where one of the knaves is stationed. Don't you want to go home? He will slay you and then I'll go back to Arthur and shame him for giving me a knight from his kitchen cinders."

"Just let me fight," cried Gareth, "and I'll have as good luck as little Cinderella who married the prince."

So they came to the first coil of the river and on the other side saw a rich white pavilion with a purple dome and a slender crimson flag fluttering above. The lawless Sir Morning-star paced up and down outside.

"Damsel, is this the knight you've brought me?" he shouted.

"Not a knight, but a knave. The king scorned you so he sent some one from his kitchen."

"Come Daughters of the Dawn and arm me!" cried Sir Morning-star, and three bare-footed, bare-headed maidens in pink and gold dresses brought him a blue coat of mail and a blue shield.

"A kitchen knave in scorn of me!" roared the blue knight. "I won't fight him. Go home, knave! It isn't proper for you to be riding abroad with a lady."

"Dog, you lie! I'm sprung from nobler lineage than you," and saying this, Gareth sprang fiercely at his adversary who met him in the middle of the bridge. The two spears were hurled so harshly that both knights were thrown from their horses like two stones but up they leaped instantly. Gareth drew forth his sword and drove his enemy back down the bridge and laid him at his feet.

"I yield, "Sir Morning-star cried, "don't kill me."

"Your life is in the hands of this lady," Gareth replied. "If she asks me to spare you I will."

"Scullion!" Lynette cried, reddening with shame. "Do you suppose I will ask a favor of you?"

"Then he dies," and Gareth was about to slay the wounded knight when Lynette screamed and told him he ought not to think of killing a man of nobler birth than himself. So Gareth

said, "Knight, your life is spared at this lady's command. Go to King Arthur's court and tell him that his kitchen knave sent you, and crave his pardon for breaking his laws."

"I thought the smells of the odors of the kitchen grew fainter while you were fighting on the bridge," Lynette remarked to Gareth as he took his place behind her and told her to lead, "but now they are as strong as ever."

So they rode on until they arrived at the second loop of the river where the knight of the Noonday-Sun flared with his burning shield that blazed so violently that Gareth saw scarlet blots before his eyes as he turned away from it.

"Here's a kitchen knave from Arthur's hall who has overthrown your brother," Lynette called across the river to him.

"Ugh!" returned Sir Noonday-Sun, raising his visor to reveal his round foolish face like a cipher, and with that he pushed his horse into the foaming stream.

Gareth met him midway and struck him four blows of his sword. As he was about to deal the fifth stroke the horse of the Noonday-Sun slipped and the stream washed his dazzling master away. Gareth plucked him out of the water and sent him back to King Arthur.

"Lead and I follow," he said to Lynette.

"Do not fancy," she rejoined, as she guided him toward the third passing of the river, "that I thought you bold or brave when you overcame Sir Noonday-Sun; he just slipped on the river-bed. Here we are at the third fool in the allegory, Sir Evening-star. You see he looks naked but he is only wrapped in hardened skins that fit him like his own. They will turn the blade of your sword."

"Never mind," Gareth said, "the wind may turn again and the kitchen odors grow faint."

Then Lynette called to the Evening-star:

"Both of your brothers have gone down before this youth and so will you. Aren't you old?"

"Old with the strength of twenty boys," said Sir Evening-star.

"Old in boasting," Gareth cried, "but the same strength that slew your brothers can slay you."

Then the Evening-star blew a deadly note upon his horn and a storm-beaten, russet, grizzly old woman came out and armed him in a quantity of dingy weapons. The two knights clashed together on the bridge and Gareth brought the Evening-star groveling in a minute to his feet on his knees. But the other vaulted up again so quickly that Gareth panted and half despaired of winning the victory.

Then Lynette cried: "Well done, knave; you are as noble as any knight. Now do not shame me; I said you would win. Strike! strike! and the wind will change again."

Gareth struck harder, he hewed great pieces of armor from the old knight, but clashed in vain with his sword against the hard skin, until at last he lashed the Evening-star's sword and broke it at the hilt. "I have you now!" he shouted, but the cowardly knight of the Evening-star writhed his arms about the lad till Gareth was almost strangled. Yet straining himself to the uttermost he finally *tossed his foe headlong over the side of the bridge* to sink or to swim as the waves allowed.

"Lead and I follow," Gareth said to Lynette.

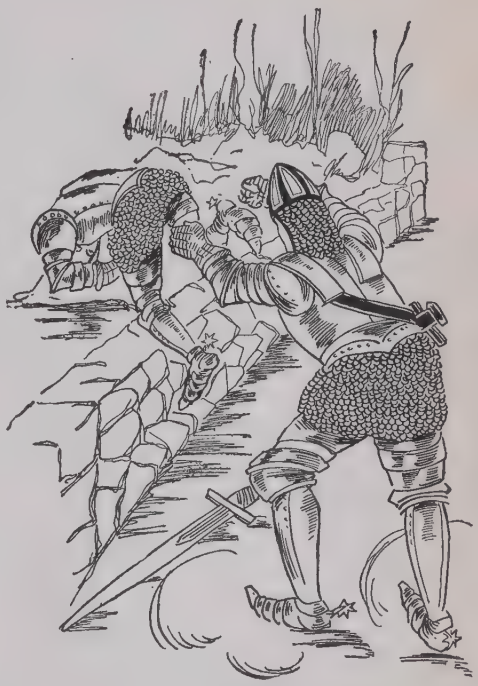
"No, it is lead no longer," the maiden replied. "Ride beside me the knightliest of all kitchen knaves. Sir I am ashamed that I have treated you so. Pardon me. I do wonder who you are, you knave."

"You are not to blame for anything," Gareth said, "except

for your mistrusting of the king when he sent you some one to defend you. You said what you thought and I answered by my actions."

At that moment he heard the hoofs of a horse clattering in the road behind him. "Stay!" cried a knight with a veiled shield, "I have come to avenge my friend, Sir Kay."

Gareth turned, and in a thrice had closed in upon the stranger, but when he felt the touch of the stranger knight's magical spear, which was the wonder of the world he fell to the earth. As he felt the grass in his hands he burst into laughter.



TOSSED HIS FOE OVER THE SIDE OF THE BRIDGE.

"Why do you laugh?" asked Lynette.

"Because here am I, the son of old King Lot and good Queen Bellicent, the victor of the three bridges, and a knight of Arthur's thrown by no one knows whom."

"I have come to help you and not harm you," said the strange knight, revealing himself. It was Lancelot, whom King Arthur had sent to keep a guardian eye upon young Gareth in this his first quest, to prevent him from being killed or taken away.

"And why did you refuse to come when I wanted you, and now come just in time to shame my poor defender just when I was beginning to feel proud of him?" asked Lynette.

"But he isn't shamed," Lancelot answered. "What knight is not overthrown sometimes? By being defeated we learn to overcome, so hail Prince and Knight of our Round Table!" "You did well Gareth, only you and your horse were a little weary."

SHE TENDED HIM AS GENTLY AS A MOTHER.

Lynette led them into a glen and a cave where they found pleasant drinks and meat, and where Gareth fell asleep.

"You have good reason to feel sleepy," cried Lynette. "Sleep soundly and wake strong." *And she tended him as*

gently as a mother, and watched over him carefully as he slept.

When Gareth woke Lancelot gave him his own horse and shield to use in fighting the last awful outlaw, but as they drew near Lynette clutched at the shield and pleaded with him: "Give it back to Lancelot," said she. "O curse my tongue that was reviling you so today. He must do the fighting now. You have done wonders, but you cannot do miracles. You have thrown three men today and that is glory enough. You will get all maimed and mangled if you go on now when you are tired. There, I vow you must not try the fourth."

But Gareth told her that her sharp words during the day had just spurred him on to do his best and he said he must not now leave his quest until he had finished. So Lancelot advised him how best to manage his horse and his lance, his sword and his shield when meeting a foe that was stouter than himself, winning with fineness and skill where he lacked in strength.

But Gareth replied that he knew but one rule in fighting and that was to dash against his foe and overcome him.

"Heaven help you," cried Lynette, and she made her palfrey halt. "There!" They were facing the camp of the Knight of Death.

There was a huge black pavilion, a black banner and a black horn. Gareth blew the horn and heard hollow tramplings to and fro and muffled voices. Then on a night-black horse, in night-black arms rode forth the dread warrior. A white breast-bone showed in front. He spoke not a word which made him the more fearful.

"Fool!" shouted Gareth sturdily. "People say that you have the strength of ten men; can't you trust to it without depending on these toggeries and tricks?"

But the Knight of Death said nothing. Lady Lyonors at her castle window wept, and one of her maids fainted away, and Gareth felt his head prickling beneath his helmet and Lancelot felt his blood turning cold. Every one stood aghast.

Then the chargers bounded forward and Gareth struck Death to the ground. Drawing out his sword he split apart the vast skull; one half of it fell to the right and one-half to the left. Then he was about to strike at the helmet when out of it peeped the face of a blooming young boy, as fresh as a flower.

"O Knight!" cried the laddie. "Do not kill me. My three brothers made me do it to make a horror all about the castle. They never dreamed that anyone could pass the bridges."

Then Lady Lyonors with all her house had a great party of dancing and revelry and song and making merry because the hideous Knight of Death that had terrified them so was only a pretty little boy. And there was mirth over Gareth's victorious quest.

And some people say that Gareth married Lynette, but others who tell the story later say he wedded with Lyonors.

THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT.

King Arthur had come to the old city of Caerleen on the River Usk to hold his court, and was sitting high in his royal hall when a woodman, all bedraggled with the mists of the forests came tripping up in haste before his throne.

"O noble King," he cried, "today I saw a wonderful deer, a hart all milky white running through among the trees, and, nothing like it has ever been seen here before."

The king, who loved the chase, was very pleased and immediately gave orders that the royal horns should be blown

for all the court to go a hunting after the beautiful white deer the following morning. Queen Guinevere wished to go with them to watch the hounds and huntsmen and dancing horses in the chase. She slept late, however, the next day with her

A WOODMAN ALL BEDRAGGLED CAME IN HASTE BEFORE HIS THRONE.

pleasant dreams, and Arthur with his Knights of the Round Table had sped gloriously away on their snorting chargers when she arose, called one of her maids to come with her, mounted her palfrey and forded the River Usk to pass over by the forest.

There they climbed up on a little knoll and stood listening for the hounds, but instead of the barking of the king's dogs they heard the sound of a horse's hoofs trampling behind them. It was Prince Geraint's charger as he flashed over the shallow ford of the river, then galloped up the banks of the knoll to her side. He carried not a single weapon except his golden-hilted sword and wore, not his hunting-dress, but gay holiday silks with a purple scarf about him swinging an apple of gold at either end and glancing like a dragon-fly. He bowed low to the sweet, stately queen.

"You're late, very late, Sir Prince," said she, "later even than we."

"Yes, noble queen," replied Geraint, "I'm so late that I'm not going to the hunt; I've come like you just to watch it."

"Then stay with me," the queen said, "for here on this little knoll, if anywhere, you will have a good chance to see the hounds, often they dash by at its very feet."

So Geraint stood by the queen, thinking he would catch particularly the baying of Cavall, Arthur's loudest dog, which would tell him that the hunters were coming. As they waited however, along the base of the knoll, came a knight, a lady and a dwarf riding slowly by on their horses. The knight wore his visor up showing his imperious and very haughty young face. The dwarf lagged behind.

"That knight doesn't belong to the Round Table, does he?" asked the queen. "I don't know him."

"No, nor I," replied Geraint.

So the queen sent her maid over to the dwarf to find out the name of his master. But the dwarf was old and crotchety and would not tell her.

"Then I'll ask your master himself," cried the maid.

"No, indeed, you shall not!" cried the dwarf, "you are not fit even to speak of him," and as the girl turned her horse to approach the proud young knight, the misshapen little dwarf

HE STRUCK OUT HIS WHIP AND CUT THE PRINCE'S CHEEK.

of a servant struck at her with his whip, and she came scampering back indignantly to the queen.

"I'll learn his name for you," Geraint exclaimed, and he rode off sharply.

But the impudent dwarf answered just as before and when Prince Geraint moved on toward his master he struck out his whip and cut the prince's cheek so that the blood streamed upon the purple scarf dyeing it red. Instantly Geraint reached for the hilt of his sword to strike down the vicious little midget but then remembering that he was a prince and disdaining to fight with a dwarf, he did not even say a word, but cantered back to Queen Guinevere's side.

"Noble Queen," he cried fiercely. "I am going to avenge this insult that has been done you. I'll track these vermin to the earth. For even although I am riding unarmed just now, as we go along I will come to some place where I can borrow weapons or hire them. And then when I have my man I'll fight him, and on the third day from today I'll be back again unless I die in the fight. So good-bye, farewell."

"Farewell, handsome prince," the queen answered. "Good fortune in your quest and may you live to marry your first love whoever that may be. But whether she will be a princess or a beggar from the hedgerows, before you wed with her bring her back to me and I will robe her for her wedding day."

Prince Geraint bowed and with that he was off. One minute he thought he heard the noble milk-white deer brought to bay by the dogs, the next he thought he heard the hunter's horn far away and felt a little vexed to think he must be following this stupid dwarf while all the others were at the chase But he had determined to avenge the queen and up and down the grassy glades and valleys pursued the three enemies until at last at sundown they emerged from the forest, climbed up on the ridge of a hill where they looked like shadows against the dark sky, then sank again on the other side.

Below on the other side of the ridge ran the long street of a

clamoring little town in a long valley, on one side a new white fortress and on the other, across a ravine and a bridge, a fallen old castle in decay. The knight, the lady and the dwarf rode on to the white fortress, then vanished within its walls.

"There!" cried Geraint, "now I have him! I have tracked him to his hole, and tomorrow when I'm rested I'll fight him."

Then he turned wearily down the long street of the noisy village to look for his night's lodging, but he found every inn and tavern crowded, and everywhere horses in the stables were being shod and young fellows were busy burnishing their master's armor.

"What does all this hubbub mean?" asked Geraint of one of these youths.

The lad did not stop his work one instant, but went on scouring and replied, "It's the sparrow-hawk."

As Prince Geraint did not know what was meant by the sparrow-hawk he trotted a little farther along the street until he came to a quiet old man trudging by with a sack of corn on his back.

"Why is your town so noisy and busy to-night, good old fellow?" he cried.

"Ugh! the sparrow-hawk!" the old fellow said gruffly.

So the prince rode his horse yet a little farther until he saw an armor-maker's shop. The armor-maker sat inside with his back turned, all doubled over a helmet which he was riveting together upon his knee.

"Armorer," cried Geraint, "what is going on? Why is there such a din?

The man did not pause in his riveting even to turn about and face the stranger, but said quickly as if to finish speaking as

rapidly as he could, "Friend, the people who are working for the sparrow-hawk have no time for idle questions."

At this Geraint flashed up angrily.

"A fig for your sparrow-hawk! I wish all the bits of birds of the air would peck him dead. You imagine that this little cackle in your baby town is all the noise and murmur of the great world. What do I care about it? It is nothing to me. Listen to me, now, if you are not gone hawk-mad like the rest, where can I get a lodging for the night, and more than that, where can I get some arms, arms, arms, to fight my enemy? Tell me."

The hurrying armor-maker looked about in amazement to see this gorgeous cavalier in purple silks standing before his bit of a shop.

"O pardon me, stranger knight" said he very politely. "We are holding a great tournament here tomorrow morning and there is hardly any time to do one-half the work that has to be finished before then. Arms, did you say? Indeed I cannot tell you where to get any; all that there are in this town are needed for to-morrow in the lists. And as for lodging, I don't know unless perhaps at Earl Yniol's in the old castle across the bridge." Then he again picked up his helmet and turned his back to the prince.

So Geraint, still a wee mite vexed, rode over the bridge that spanned the ravine, to go to the ruined castle. There upon the farther side sat the hoary-headed Earl Yniol, dressed in some magnificient shabby old clothes which had been fit for a king's parties when they were new.

"Where are you going, son?" he queried of Geraint, waking from his reveries and dreaminess.

"O friend, I'm looking for some shelter for the night," Geraint replied.

"Come in then, "Yniol said, "and accept of my hospitality. Our house was rich once and now it is poor, but it always keeps its door open to the stranger."

"Oh, anything will do for me," cried Geraint. "If only you won't serve me sparrow-hawks for my supper I'll eat with all the passion of a whole day's fast."

The old earl smiled and sighed as he rejoined, "I have more serious reason than you to curse this sparrow-hawk. But go in and we will not have a word about him even jokingly unless you wish it."

Whereupon Geraint passed into the desolate castle court, where the stones of the pavement were all broken and overgrown with wild plants, and the turrets and walls were shattered As he stood awaiting the Earl Yniol, the voice of a young girl singing like a nightingale rang out from one of the open castle windows.

It was the voice of Enid, Earl Yniol's daughter as she sang the song of Fortune and her Wheel:

> "Turn, Fortune, thy wheel with smile or frown,
> With that wild wheel we go not up or down;
> Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great."

"The song of that little bird describes the nest she lives in," cried Earl Yniol approaching. "Enter."

Geraint alighted from his charger and stepped within the large dusky cobwebbed hall, where an aged lady sat, with Enid moving about her, like a little flower in a wilted sheath of a faded silk gown.

"Enid, the good knight's horse is standing in the court," cried the earl. "Take him to the stall and give him some corn, then go to town and buy us some meat and wine."

GERAINT STEPPED WITHIN THE DUSKY COBWEBBED HALL.

Geraint wished that he might do this servant's work instead of this pretty young lady, but as he started to follow her the old gray earl stopped him.

"We're old and poor," he said, "but not so poor and old as to let our guests wait upon themselves."

So Enid fetched the wine and the meat and the cakes and the

bread; and she served at the table while her mother, father and Geraint sat around. Geraint wished that he might stoop to kiss her tender little thumb as it held the platter when she laid it down.

ENID FETCHED THE WINE AND THE MEAT AND THE CAKES.

"Fair host and Earl," he said after his refreshing supper, "who is this sparrow-hawk that everybody in the town is talking about? And yet I do not wish you to give me his name, for perhaps he is the knight I saw riding into the new fortress the other side of the bridge at the other end of

the town. His name I am going to have from his own lips, for I am Geraint of Devon. This morning when the queen sent her maid to find out his name he struck at the girl with his whip, and I've sworn vengeance for such a great insult done our queen, and have followed him to his hold, and as soon as I can get arms I will fight him."

"And are you the renowned Geraint?" cried Earl Yniol beaming. "Well, as soon as I saw you coming toward me on the bridge I knew that you were no ordinary man. By the state and presence of your bearing I might have guessed you to be one of Arthur's Knights of the Round Table at Camelot. Pray do not suppose that I am flattering you foolishly. This dear child of mine has often heard me telling glorious stories of all the famous things you have done for the king and the people. And she has asked me to repeat them again and again.

"Poor thing, there never has lived a woman with such miserable lovers as she has had. The first was Limours, who did nothing but drink and brawl, even when he was making love to her. And the second was the 'sparrow-hawk,' my nephew, my curse. I will not let his name slip from me if I can help it. When I told him that he could not marry my daughter he spread a false rumour all round here among the people that his father had left him a great sum of money in my keeping and that I had never passed it over to him but had retained it for myself. He bribed all my servants with large promises and stirred up this whole little old town of mine against me, my own town. That was the night of Enid's birthday nearly three years ago. They sacked my house, ousted me from my earldom, threw us into this dilapidated, dingy old place and built up that grand new white

fort. He would kill me if he did not despise me too much to do so; and sometimes I believe I despise myself for letting him have his way. I scarcely know whether I am very wise or very silly, very manly or very base to suffer it all so patiently."

"Well said," cried Geraint eagerly. "But the arms, the arms, where can I get arms for myself? Then if the sparrow-hawk will fight tomorrow in the tourney I may be able to bring down his terrible pride a little.

"I have arms," said Yniol, "although they are old and rusty, Prince Geraint, and you would be welcome to have them for the asking. But in this tournament of tomorrow no knight is allowed to tilt unless the lady he loves best come there too. The forks are fastened into the meadow ground and over them is placed a silver wand, above that a golden sparrow-hawk, the prize of beauty for the fairest woman there. And whoever wins in the tourney presents this to the lady-love whom he has brought with him. Since my nephew is a man of very large bone and is clever with his lance he has always won it for his lady. That is how he has earned his title of sparrow-hawk. But you have no lady so you will not be able to fight."

Then Geraint leaned forward toward the earl.

"With your leave, noble Earl Yniol," he replied, "I will do battle for your daughter. For although I have seen all the beauties of the day never have I come upon anything so wonderfully lovely as she. If it should happen that I prove victor, as true as heaven, I will make her my wife!"

Yniol's heart danced in his bosom for joy, and he turned about for Enid, but she had fluttered away as soon as her name

had been mentioned, so he tenderly grasped the hands of her mother in his own and said:

"Mother, young girls are shy little things and best understood by their own mothers. Before you go to rest to night, find out what Enid will think about this."

So the earl's wife passed out to speak with Enid, and Enid became so glad and excited that she could not sleep the entire happy night long. But very early the next morning, as soon as the pale sky began to redden with the sun she arose, then called her mother, and hand in hand, tripped over with her to the place of the tournament. There they awaited for Yniol and Geraint. Geraint came wearing the Earl's rusty, worn old arms, yet in spite of them looked stately and princely.

Many other knights in blazing armor gathered there for the jousts, with many fine ladies, and by and by the whole town full of people flooded in, settling in a circle around the lists. Then the two forks were fixed into the earth, above them a wand of silver was laid, and over it the golden sparrow-hawk. The trumpet was blown and Yniol's nephew rose and spoke:

"Come forward, my lady," he cried to the maiden who had come with him. "Fairest of the fair, take the prize of beauty which I have won for you during the past two years."

"Stay!" Prince Geraint cried loudly. "There is a worthier beauty here."

The earl's nephew looked round with surprise and disdain to see his uncle's family and the prince.

"Do battle for it then," he shouted angrily.

Geraint sprang forward and the tourney was begun. Three times the two warriors clashed together. *Three times they broke their spears.* Then both were thrown from their horses.

They now drew their swords; and with them lashed at one another so frequently and with such dreadfully hard strokes that all the crowd wondered. Now and again from the distant walls came the sounds of applause, like the clapping of phantom hands. The perspiration and the blood flowed together down the strong bodies of the combatants. Each was as sturdy as the other.

"Remember the great insult done our queen!" Earl Yniol cried at last.

This so inflamed Geraint that he heaved his vast sword-blade aloft, cracked through his enemy's helmet, bit into the bone of his head, felled the haughty knight, and set his feet upon his breast.

"Your name!" demanded Geraint.

"Edryn, the son of Nudd," groaned the fallen warrior.

"Very well, then Edryn, the son of Nudd," returned Geraint, "you must do these two things or else you will have to die. First, you with your lady and your dwarf must ride to Arthur's court at Caerleon and crave their pardon for the insult you did the queen yesterday morning, and you must bide her decree in the punishment she awards you. Secondly, you must give back the earldom to your uncle the Earl of Yniol. You will do these two things or you die."

"I will do them," cried Edryn. "For never before was I ever overcome. But now all of my pride is broken down, for Enid has seen me fall."

With that Edryn rose from the ground like a man, took his lady and the dwarf on their horses to Arthur's court. There receiving the sweet forgiveness of the queen, he became a true knight of the Round Table, and at the last died in battle while he fought for his king.

But Geraint when the tourney was over and he had come back to the castle, drew Enid aside to tell her that early the next morning he would have to start for Caerleon and that she should be ready to ride away with him to be married at the court with tremendous pomp. For that would be three days after the King's chase, when the prince had promised Queen Guinevere he would be back. But of that he did not speak to Enid, who wondered why he was so bent on returning immediately, and why she could not have time at home to prepare herself some pretty robes to wear.

Imagine, she thought, such a grand and frightful thing as a court, the queen's court, with all the graceful ladies staring at her in that faded old silk dress! And although she promised Geraint that she would go as he wished, when she woke to the dread day for making her appearance at court, she still yearned that he would only stay yet a little while so that she could sew herself some clothes, that she had the flowered silk which her mother had given her three years ago for her birthday and which Edryn's men had robbed from her when they sacked the house and scattered everything she ever owned to all the winds. How she wished that handsome Geraint had known her then, those three years ago when she wore so many pretty dresses and jewels!

But while she lay dreamily thinking, softly in trod her mother bearing on her arm a gorgeous, delicate robe.

"Do you recognize it, child?" she cried.

It was that self-same birthday dress, three years old, but as beautiful as new and never worn.

"Yesterday after the jousts your father went through all the town from house to house and ordered that all sack and plunder which the men had taken from us should be brought back, for

he was again to be in his earldom. So last evening while you were talking with the prince some one came up from the town and placed this in my hands. I did not tell you about it then for I wished to keep it as a sweet surprise for you this morning. And it is a sweet surprise, isn't it? For although the prince yesterday did say that you were the fairest of the fair there is no handsome girl in the world but looks handsomer in new clothes than in old. And it would have been a shame for you to go to the court in your poor old faded silk which you have worn so long and so patiently. The great ladies there might say that Prince Geraint had plucked up some ragged robin from the hedges."

BEARING A GORGEOUS ROBE.

So Enid was put into the fine flowered robe.

Her mother said that after she had gone to the queen's court, she, the poor old mother at home, who was too feeble to journey so far with her daughter, would think over and over again of her pretty princess at Camelot. And the old gray Earl Yniol went in to tell Geraint of Enid's fanciful apparel.

But Geraint was not delighted with the magnificence.

"Say to her," he answered the earl, "that by all my love for her, although I give her no other reason, I entreat Enid to wear that faded old silk dress of hers and no other."

This amazing and hard message from Geraint made poor little Enid's face fall like a meadowful of corn blasted by a rainstorm. Still she willingly laid aside her gold finery for his sake, slipped into the faded silk, and pattered down the steps to meet Geraint. He scanned her so eagerly from her tip to her toe that both her rosy cheeks burned like flames. Then as he noted her mother's clouded face he said very kindly:

"My new mother don't be very angry, or grieved with your new son because of what I have just asked Enid to do. I had a very good reason for it and I will explain it all to you. The other day when I left the queen at Caerleon to avenge the insult done her by Edryn, the son of Nudd, she made me two wishes. The one was that I should be successful with my quest and the other was that I should wed with my first love. Then she promised that whoever my bride should be she herself with her own royal hands would dress her for her wedding day, splendidly, like the very sun in the skies. So when I found this lovely Enid of yours in her shabby clothes I vowed that the queen's hands only should array her in handsome new robes that befitted her grace and beauty. But never mind, dear mother, some day you will come to see Enid and then she will wear the golden, flowered birthday dress which you gave her three years ago."

Then the earl's wife smiled through her tears, wrapped Enid in a mantle, kissed her gentle farewells, and in a moment saw her riding far, far away beside Geraint.

The queen Guinevere that day had three times climbed the royal tower at Caerleon to look far into the valley for some sign of Geraint, who had promised to be back that day, if he did not fall in battle, and who would certainly come now, since Edryn had been vanquished and had come to the court.

At last when evening had fallen she spied the prince's charger pacing nobly along the road, and Enid's palfrey at his side. Instantly Queen Guinevere sped down from the small window in the high turret, tripped out to the gate to greet him and embrace the lovely Enid as a long-loved friend.

The old City of Caerleon was gay for one whole week, over the wedding week of Geraint and Enid. The queen herself dressed Enid for her marriage like the very sunlight, Dubric, the highest saint of the church, married them, and they lived for nearly a year at the court with Arthur and sweet Guinevere.

And so the insult done the queen was avenged, and her two wishes were fulfilled. For Geraint overcame his enemy and wedded with his first-love, dressed for her marriage by the queen.

GERAINT'S QUEST OF HONOR.

One morning Prince Geraint went into Arthur's hall and said:

"O King, my princedom is in danger. It lies close to the territory which is infested with bandits, earls and caitiff knights, assassins and all sorts of outlaws. Give me your kind good leave and I will go there to defend my lands."

The king said the prince might go, and sent fifty armed knights to protect him and pretty Enid as they traveled away on their horses across the Severn River into their own country, the Land of Devon.

After Geraint had come into Devon he forgot what he had said to the king of ridding his princedom of outlawry, he forgot the chase where he had always been so clever in tracking his

game, forgot the tournament where he had won victory after victory, forgot all his former glory and his name, forgot his lands and their cares, forgot everything he ever did, and did nothing at all but lie about at home and talk with Enid.

ENID HEARD OF GERAINT FROM HER HAIR-DRESSER.

At last all his people began to gossip about their fine prince who once had been illustrious everywhere and now had become an idle stay-at-home who spent his time in making love to his wife.

Enid heard of the tattling about Geraint from her hair-dresser, and one morning as he lay abed, she went over it all

to herself, talking aloud. She wished, that he would not abandon all his knightly pursuits but would hunt and fight again and add to his lustre. She felt very bashful about mentioning the matter to him as she was very shy by nature and lived in a time when wives were altogether over-ruled by their husbands, yet to say nothing she thought would not be showing herself a true wife to Geraint. All this and more Enid went over to herself.

The drowsy prince, half awake, just half heard her and quite misunderstood her meaning. When she said that in keeping quiet about the gossip she was not a true wife to him he supposed she meant that she no longer cared for him, that he was not a handsome and strong enough man to suit her. This grieved him deeply and made him very angry with her, for Geraint had really given up all the glory of the king's court just to be alone with Enid, although no one knew it. And the thought that now she looked down upon him infuriated all his heart. A word would have made everything right but he didn't say it.

Springly up quickly from his bed he roused his squire and said, "Get ready our horses, my charger and the princess' palfrey. And you," turning a frowning face to the princess, "put on the worst looking, meanest, poorest dress you have and come away with me. We are going on a quest of honor and then you will see what sort of soldier I am."

Enid wondered why her lord was so vexed with her and replied, "If I have displeased you surely you will tell me why."

But Geraint would not say; he could not bear to speak of it. So Enid hurried after her poor old faded silk gown with the summer flowers among its folds, which she had worn to ride from her old home to Caerleon, and hastily dressed.

"Do not ride at my side," Geraint said as they both mounted their horses to start away. "Ride ahead of me, a good way ahead of me, and no matter what may happen, do not speak a word to me, no not a word."

Enid listened, wondering what had come over her lord.

"There!" he cried as they were off, "we will make our way along with our iron weapons, not with gold money." So saying, he loosed the great purse which dangled from his belt and tossed it back to his squire who stood on the marble threshold of the doorway where the golden coins flashed and clattered as they scattered every which-way over the floor. "Now then, Enid, to the wild woods!"

At that they made for the swampy, desolated forest lands that were famous for their perilous paths and their bandits, Enid with a white face going before, Geraint coming gloomily nearly a quarter of a mile after.

The morning was only half begun when the white princess became aware that behind a rock hiding in the shadow stood three tall knights on horseback, armed from tip to toe, bandit outlaws lying in wait to fall upon whoever should pass. She heard one saying to his comrades as he pointed toward Geraint:

"Look here comes some lazy-bones who seems just about as bold as a dog who has had the worst of it in a fight. Come, we will kill him, and then we will take his horse and armor and his lady."

Enid thought, "I'll go back a little way to Geraint and tell him about these ruffians, for even if it will madden him I should rather have him kill me than to have him fall into their hands."

She guided her palfrey backward and bravely met the frowning face which greeted her, saying timidly:

"My lord, there are three bandit knights behind a rock a little way beyond us who are boasting that they will slay you and steal your horse and armor and make me their captive."

"Did I tell you," cried Geraint angrily, "that you should warn me of any danger. There was only one thing which I told you to do and that was to keep quiet; and this is the way you have heeded me! a pretty way! But win or lose, you shall see by these fellows that my vigor is not lost."

Then Enid stood back as the three outlaws flashed out of their ambush and bore down upon the prince.

Geraint aimed first for the middle one, driving his long spear into the bandit's breast and out on the other side. The two others in the meanwhile had dashed upon him with their lances, but they had broken on his magnificent armor like so many icicles. He now turned upon them with his broadsword, swinging it first to the right and then to the left, first stunning them with his blows, then slaying them outright. And when all three had fallen he dismounted, and like a hunter skinning the wild beasts he has shot, he stripped the three robber knights of their gay suits of armor, and leaving the bodies lie, bound each man's sword, spear and coat of arms to his horse, tied the three bridle reins of the three empty horses together and cried to Enid.

"Drive these on before you.

Enid drove them on across the wastelands, Geraint following after. As she passed into the first shallow shade of the forest she described three more horsemen partly hidden in the gloom of three sturdy oak-trees. All were armed and one was a veritable giant, so tall and bulky, towering above his companions.

"See there, a prize!" bellowed the giant and set Enid's pulses

THE THREE OUTLAWS BORE DOWN UPON THE PRINCE.

in a quiver. "Three horses and three suits of armor, and all in charge of —whom? A girl! Isn't that simple? Lay on, my men!"

"No," cried the second, "behind is coming a knight. A coward and a fool, for see how he hangs his head."

The giant thundered back gaily.

"Yes? Only one? Wait here and as he goes by make for him."

"I will go no farther until Geraint comes," Enid said to herself stopping her horse. "And then I will tell him about these villains. He must be so weary with his other fight and they will fall upon him unawares. I shall have to disobey him again for his own sake. How could I dare to obey him and let him be harmed? I must speak; if he kills me for it I shall only have lost my own life to save a life that is dearer to me than my own."

So she waited until the prince approached when she said with a timid firmness, "Have I your leave to speak?"

"You take it without asking when you speak," he replied, and she continued:

"There are three men lurking in the woods behind some oaks and one of them is larger than you, a perfect giant. He told them to attack you as you passed by them."

"If there were a hundred men in the wood and each of them a giant and if they all made for me together I vow it would not anger me so as to have you disobey me. Stand aside while we do battle and when we are done stand by the victor."

At this, while Enid fell back breathing short fits of prayer but not daring to watch, Geraint proceeded to meet his assailants. The giant was the first to dash out for him aiming his lance at Geraint's helmet, but the lance missed and went to one

side. Geraint's spear had been a little strained with his first encounter, but it struck through the bulky giant's corselet and pierced his breast, then broke, one-half of it still fast in the flesh as the giant knight fell to the earth. The other two bandits now felt that their support and hero was gone, and when Geraint darted rapidly on them, uttering his terrible warcry as if there were a thousand men behind him to come to his aid, they flew into the woods. But they were soon overtaken and pitilessly put to death. Then Geraint, selecting the best lance, the brightest and strongest among their spears to replace the one he had broken on the giant, he plucked off the gaudy armor from each brigand's body, laid it on the backs of the three horses, tied the bridle reins together and handed them to Enid with the words, "Drive them on before you."

So Enid now followed the wild paths of the gloomy forest with two sets of three horses, each horse laden with his master's jingling weapons and coat of mail. Geraint came after. As they passed out of the wood into the open sky they came to a little town with towers upon a rocky hill, and beneath it a wide meadowland with mowers in it, mowing the hay. Down a stony pathway from the town skipped a fair-haired lad carrying a basket of lunch for the laborers in the field.

Friend!" cried Geraint, as the lad trotted past him, for he saw that Enid looked very white, "let my lady have something to eat. She is so faint."

"Willingly," the youth answered, "and you too, my lord, even although this feed is very coarse and only fit for the mowers."

He set down his basket and Enid and Geraint alighted and put all the horses to graze, while they sat down on the green sward to have some bread and barley. Enid felt too faint at

heart, thinking of the prince's strange conduct, to care a great deal for food, but Geraint was hungry enough and had all the mowers' basket emptied almost before he knew it.

"Boy," he cried half-ashamed, "everything is gone, which is a disgrace. But take one of my horses and his arms by way of payment, choose the very best."

The poor lad, who might as well have had a kingdom given him, reddened with his extreme surprise and delight.

"My lord, you are over-paying me fifty times," he cried.

"You will be all the wealthier then," returned the prince, gaily.

"I'll take it as free gift, then," the lad answered. "The food is not worth much. While your lady is resting here I can easily go back and fetch more, some more for the earl's mowers. For all these mowers belong to our great earl, and all these fields are his, and I am his, too. I'll tell him what a fine man your are, and he will have you to his palace and serve you with costly dinners."

"I wish no better fare than I have had," Geraint said, "I never ate better in my life than just now when I left your poor mowers dinnerless. And I will go into no earl's palace. If he desires to see me, let him come to me. Now you go hire us some pleasant room in the town, stall our horses and when you return with the food for these men tell us about it."

"Yes, my kind lord," the glad youth cried, and he held his head high and thought he was a gorgeous knight off to the wars as he disappeared up the rocky path leading his handsome horse.

The prince turned himself sleepily to watch the lusty mowers laboring under the sun as it blazed on their scythes, while Enid plucked the long grass by the meadows' edge to

weave it round and round her wedding ring, until the boy returned and showed them the room he had got in the town.

"If you wish anything, call the woman of the house," Prince Geraint said to Enid as the door closed behind them. "Do not speak to me."

"Yes, my lord," returned Enid, still marvelling at his cold ways.

Silently they sat down, she at one end, he at the other, as quiet as pictures. But suddenly a mass of voices sounded up the street, and heel after heel echoing upon the pavement. In a twinkling the door to their room was pushed back to the wall while a mob of boisterous young gentlemen tumbled in led by the Earl of Limours, the wild lord of the town, and Enid's old suitor whom her father had rejected long ago, a man as beautiful as a woman and very graceful. He seized the prince's hand warmly, welcomed him to the town and stealthily, out of the corner of his eye, caught a glimpse of unhappy Enid nestled all alone at the farther end of the room.

The prince immediately sent for every sort of delicious things to eat and drink from the town, told the earl, to bid all his friends for a feast and soon was gaily making merry with the men, drinking, laughing, joking.

"May I have your leave, my lord," cried Earl Limours, "to cross the room and speak a word with your lady who seems so lonely?"

"My free leave," cried the merry Prince Geraint, who did not know the earl, "Get her to speak with you; she has nothing to say to me."

As Limours stepped to Enid's side he lifted his eyes adoringly, bowed at her side and said in a whisper:

"Enid, you pilot star of my life, I see that Geraint is very

unkind to you and loves you no longer. What a laughing stock he is making of you with that wretched old dress you have on! But I, I love you still as always. Just say the word and I will have him put into the keep and you will come with me. I will be kind to you forever."

The tears fluttered into the earl's eyes as he spoke .

"Earl," replied Enid, "if you love me as you used to do in the years long ago, and are not joking now, come in the morning and take me by force from the prince. But leave me to-night. I am wearied to death."

So the earl made a low bow, brandishing his plumes until they brushed his very insteps, while the stout prince bade him a loud good night, and he moved away talking to his men.

THE EARL MADE A LOW BOW.

But as soon as he was gone Enid began to plan how she could escape with Geraint before Earl Limours should come after her in the morning. She was too afraid of Geraint to speak with him about it, but when he had fallen asleep she stepped lightly about the room and gathered the pieces of his armor together in one place ready for an early departure on the morrow. Then she dropped off into slumber. But suddenly she heard a loud sound, the earl with his wild following blowing his trumpet to call her to come out, she thought. But it was only the

great red cock in the yard below crowing at the daylight which had begun to glimmer now across the heap of Geraint's armor. She rose immediately in her fright to see that all was well, went over to examine the weapons and unwittingly let the casque fall jangling to the floor. This woke Geraint, who started up and stared at her.

"My lord," began Enid, and then she told him all that Earl Limours had said to her and how she had put him off by telling him to come this morning.

"Call the woman of the house and tell her to bring the charger and the palfrey," Geriant cried angrily. "Your sweet face makes fools of good fellows." Geraint loved Enid still and he was in as great perplexity as she, for after misunderstanding what she had said he no more knew whether she cared for him truly than she knew what was troubling him and making him act in this unaccountable manner.

Enid slipped through the sleeping household like a ghost to deliver the prince's message to the landlord, hurried back to help Geraint with his armor and came down with him to spring upon her palfrey.

"What do I owe you, friends?" the prince asked his host, but before the man could reply he added "take those five horses and their burdens of arms."

"My lord, I have scarcely spent the price of one of them on you!" cried the landlord astonished.

"You'll have all the more riches then," the prince laughed, then turning to Enid, "today I charge you more particularly than ever before that whatever you may see, hear, fancy or imagine, do not speak to me, but obey."

"Yes, my lord," answered Enid, "I know your wish and should like to obey, but when I go riding ahead, I hear all the

violent threats you do not hear and see the danger you cannot see, and then not to give you warning seems hard, almost beyond me. Yet, I wish to obey you.''

''Do so, then,'' said he. ''Do not be too wise, seeing that you are married, not to a clown but a strong man with arms to guard his own head and yours, too.''

The broad beaten path which they now took passed through toward the wasted lands bordering on the castle of Earl Doorm, the Bull, as his people called him, because of his ferocity.

It was still early morning when Enid caught the sound of quantities of hoofs galloping up the road. Turning round she saw cloudsful of dust and the points of lances sparkling in it. Then, not to disobey the prince, yet to give him warning, she held up her finger and pointed toward the dust. Geraint was pleased at her cunning, and immediately stopped his horse. The moment after, the Earl of Limours dashed in upon him on a charger as black and as stormy as a thunder-cloud.

Geraint closed with the earl, bore down on him with his spear, and in a minute brought him stunned or dead to the ground. Then he turned to the next-comer after Limours, overthrew him and blindly rushed back upon all the men behind. But they were so startled at the flash and movement of the prince that they scrambled away in a panic, leaving their leader lying on the public highway. The horses also of the fallen warriors whisked off from their wounded masters and wildly flew away to mix with the vanishing mob.

''Horse and man, all of one mind,'' remarked Geraint, smiling, ''not a hoof of them left. What do you say, Enid, shall we strip the earl and pay for a dinner or shall we fast? Fast? Then go on and let us pray heaven to send us some Earl of Doorm's men so that we can earn ourselves something to eat.''

Enid sadly eyed her bridle-reins and led the way, Geraint coming after, scarcely knowing that he had been pricked by Limours in his side, and that he was bleeding secretly beneath his armor. But at last his head and helmet began to wag un-

ENID SAT DOWN DESOLATELY AND BEGAN TO CRY.

steadily, and at a sudden swerving of the road he was tossed from his horse upon a bank of grass. Enid heard the clashing of the fall, and too terrified to cry out, came back all pale. Then she dismounted, loosed the fastenings of his armor and bound up his wounds with her veil. Then she sat down desolately and began to cry, wondering what ever she should do.

Many men passed by but no one took any notice of her. For

in that lawless, turbulent earldom no one minded a woman weeping for a murdered lover than they now mind a summer shower. One man scurrying as fast as ever he could travel toward the bandit earl's castle, drove the sand sweeping into her poor eyes, and another coming in the opposite direction from out the earl's castle park in seeming hot haste, turned all the long dusty road into a column of smoke behind him, and frightened her little palfrey so that it scoured off into the coppices and was lost. But the prince's charger stood beside them and grieved over the mishap like a man.

At noon a huge warrior with a big face and russet beard and eyes rolling about in search of prey, came riding hard by with a hundred spearmen at his back all bound for some foray. It was the frightful Earl Doorm.

"What, is he dead?" cried the earl loudly to Enid, as he spied her on the wayside.

"No, no, not dead," she quickly answered. "Would some of your kind people take him up and bear him off somewhere out of this cruel sun? I am very sure, quite sure that he is not dead."

"Well, if he isn't dead, why should you cry for him so? Dead or not dead, you just spoil your pretty face with idiotic tears. They will not help him. But since it is a pretty face, come fellows, some of you, and take him to our hall. If he lives he will be one of our band, and if not, why there is earth enough to bury him in. See that you take his charger, too, a noble one."

And so saying, the rude earl passed on, while two brawny horsemen came forward growling to think they might lose their chance of booty from the morning's raid all for this dead man. They raised the prince upon a litter, laying him in the hollow

of his shield, and brought him into the barren hall of Doorm, while Enid and the gentle charger followed after. They tossed him and his litter down on an oaken settle in the hall, and then shot away for the woods.

Enid sat through long hours all alone with Geraint besides the oaken settle, propping his head and chafing his hands, but in the late afternoon she saw the huge Earl Doorm returning with his lusty spearmen and their plunder. Each hurled down a heap of spoils on the floor, threw aside his lance and doffed his helmet, while a tribe of brightly gowned gentlewomen fluttered into the hall and began to talk with them. Earl Doorm struck his knife against the table and bellowed for meat, and wine. In a moment the place fairly steamed and smoked with whole roast hogs and oxen, and everybody sat down in a hodge-podge and ate like cattle feeding in their stalls, while Enid shrank far back startled, into her nook.

But suddenly, when Earl Doorm had eaten all he would, and all he could for the moment, he revolved his eyes about the bare hall and caught a glimpse of the fair little lady drooping in her niche. Then he recollected how she had crouched weeping by the roadside for her fallen lord that morning. A wild pity filled his gruff heart.

"Eat, eat!" he shouted. "I never before saw anything so pale. Be yourself. Isn't your lord lucky, for were I dead who is there in all the world who would mourn for me? Sweet lady, never have I ever seen a lily like you. If there were a bit of color living in your cheeks there is not one among my gentlewomen here who would be fit to wear your slippers for gloves. But listen to me and you will share my earldom with me, girl, and we will live like two birds in a nest and I will bring you all sorts of finery from every part of the world to make you happy.

As the earl spoke his two cheeks bulged with the two tremendous morsels of meat which he had tucked into his mouth.

Enid was more alarmed than ever.

"How can I be happy over anything," replied she, "until my lord is well again?"

The earl laughed, then plucked her up out of the corner, carried her over to the table, thrust a dish of food before her and held a horn of wine to her lips.

"By all heaven," cried Enid, "I will not drink until my lord gets up and drinks and eats with me. And if he will not rise again I will not drink any wine until I die."

At this the earl turned perfectly red and paced up and down the hall, gnawing first his upper and then his lower lip.

"Girl," shouted he, "why wail over a man who shames your beauty so, by dressing it in that rag? Put off those beggar-woman's weeds and robe yourself in this which my gentlewoman has brought you."

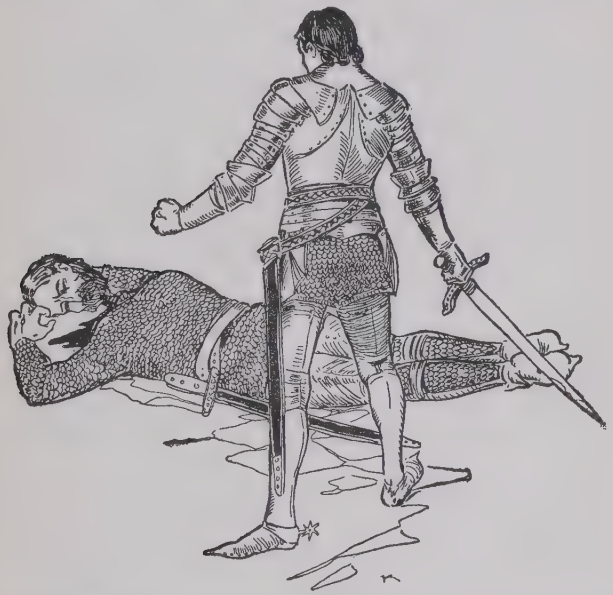
It was a gorgeous, wonderful dress, colored in the tints of a shallow sea with the blue playing into the green, and gemmed with precious stones all down the front of it as thick as dewdrops on the grass. But Enid was harder to move than any cold tyrant on his throne, and said:

"Earl, in this poor gown my dear lord found me first and loved me while I was living with my father; in this poor gown I rode with him to court and was presented to the queen; in this poor gown he bade me ride as we came out on this fatal quest of honor, and in this poor gown I am going to stay until he gets up again, a live, strong man, and tells me to put it away. I have griefs enough, pray be gentle with me, let me be. O God! I beg of your gentleness, since he is as he is, to let me be."

Then the brutal earl strode up and down the hall and cried out:

"It is of no more use to be gentle with you than to be rough. So take my salute," and with that he slapped her lightly on her white cheek.

Enid shrieked. Instantly the fallen Geraint was up on his feet with the sword that had laid beside him in the hollow of the shield, making a single bound for the earl, and with one sweep of it sheared through the swarthy neck. The rolling



THE RUSSET-BEARDED HEAD TUMBLED OVER THE FLOOR LIKE A BALL.

eyes turned glassy, the russet-bearded head tumbled over the floor like a ball, and all the bandit knights and the gentlewomen in the hall flitted, scampering pell-mell away, yelling as if they had seen a ghoul. Enid and Geraint were left alone.

Now Geraint had come out of his swoon before the earl had returned, and he had lain perfectly silent and immovable because he wished to test Enid and see what she would do when

she thought he was sleeping or fainted away, or perhaps dead. So he had listened to all that had taken place and had heard everything that Earl Doorm had said to her and all that Enid had replied, so now he knew that she loved him as ever and that she stood steadfast by him. All his heart filled with pity and remorse that he had brought her away on this hard, hard quest, and had made her suffer so much and had been so rough and cold.

"Enid," said the prince tenderly, very tenderly. "I have used you worse than that big dead brute of a man used you. I have done you more wrong than he. I misunderstood you. Now, now you are three times mine."

Geraint's kindness burst upon Enid so abruptly and was so unforeseen that she could not speak a word only this:

"Fly, Geraint, they will kill you, they will come back. Fly. Your horse is outside, my poor little thing is lost."

"You shall ride behind me, then, Enid."

So they slipped quickly outside, found the stately charger and mounted him, first Geraint, then Enid, climbing up the prince's feet, and throwing her arms about him to hold herself firm as they bounded off.

But as the horse dashed outside of the earl's gateway there before them in the highroad stood a knight of Arthur's court holding his lance as if ready to spring upon Geraint.

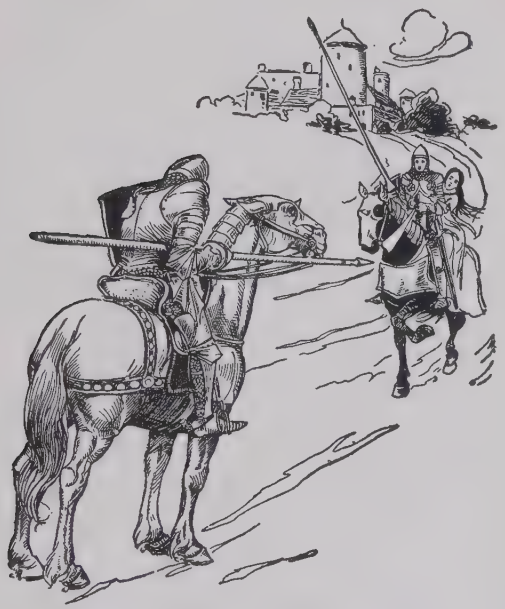
"Stranger!" shrieked Enid, thinking of the prince's wound and loss of blood, "do not kill a dead man!"

"The voice of Enid!" cried the stranger knight.

Then Enid saw that he was Edryn, the son of Nudd, and feeling the more terrified as she remembered the jousts, cried out:

"O, cousin, this is the man who spared your life!"

Edryn stepped forward. "My lord Geraint," he said, "I took you for some bandit knight of Doorm's. Do not fear, Enid, that I will attack the prince. I love him. When he over-



BEFORE THEM IN THE HIGHROAD STOOD A KNIGHT OF ARTHUR'S COURT.

threw me at the lists he threw me higher. For now I have been made a Knight of the Round Table and am altogether changed. But since I used to know Earl Doorm in the old days when I was lawless and half a bandit myself, I have come as the mouthpiece of our king to tell Doorm to disband all his men and become subject to Arthur, who is now on his way hither."

"Doorm is now before the King of Kings," Geraint replied "And his men are already scattered," and the prince pointed

to groups in the thickets or still running off in their panic. Then back to the people all aghast whom they could see huddling, he related fully to Edryn how he had slain the huge earl in his own hall.

TO THE ROYAL CAMP WHERE ARTHUR CAME OUT TO GREET THEM.

"Come with me to the king," astonished Edryn said.

So they all traveled off to the royal camp where Arthur himself came out to greet them, lifted Enid from her saddle, kissed her and showed her a tent where his own physician came in to

attend to Geraint's wound. When that was healed he rode away with them to Caerleon for a visit with Queen Guinevere, who dressed Enid again in magnificent clothes. Then fifty armed knights escorted Enid and the prince as far as the banks of the Severn River, where they crossed over into the land of Devon. And all their people welcomed them back.

Geraint after that never forgot his princedom or the tournament, but was known through all the country round as the cleverest and bravest warrior, while his princess was called Enid the Good.

MERLIN AND VIVIEN.

Vivien was a very clever, wily and wicked woman, who wanted to become a greater magician than even the great Merlin, who was the most famous man of all his times, who understood all the arts, who had built the king's harbors, ships and halls, who was a fine poet and who could read the future in the stars in the skies.

He had once told Vivien of a charm that he could work to make people invisible. Whenever he worked it upon anyone that person would seem to be imprisoned within the four walls of a tower and could not get out. The person would seem dead, lost to every one, and could be seen only by the person who worked the charm. Vivien yearned to know what the charm was, for she wanted to cast its spell on Merlin so that no one would know where he was and she could become a great enchantress in the realm, as she foolishly thought. And she planned very cleverly so as to find out the wise old man's secret.

She wanted him to think that she loved him dearly. At first she played about him with lively, pretty talk, vivid smiles, and he watched and laughed at her as if she were a playful kitten. Then as she saw that he half disdained her she began to put on very grave and serious fits, turned red and pale when he came near her, or sighed or gazed at him, so silently and with such sweet devotion that he half believed that she really loved him truly.

HE LAUGHED AT HER.

But after a while a great melancholy fell over Merlin, he felt so terribly sad that he passed away out of the kings' court and went down to the beach. There he found a little boat and stepped into it. Vivien had followed him without his knowing it. She sat down in the boat and while he took the sail she seized the helm of the boat. They were driven across the sea with a strong wind and came to the shores of Brittany. Here Merlin got out and Vivien followed him all the way into the wild woods of Broceliande. Every step of the way Merlin was perfectly quiet.

They sat down together, she lay beside him and kissed his feet as if in the deepest reverence and love. A twist of gold was wound round her hair, a priceless robe of satiny samite clung about her beautiful limbs. As she kissed his feet she cried:

"Trample me down, dear feet which I have followed all

through the world and I will worship you. Tread me down and I will kiss you for it."

But Merlin still said not a word.

MERLIN FELT SO TERRIBLY SAD.

"Merlin do you love me?" at last cried Vivien, with her face sadly appealing to him. And again, "O, Merlin, do you love me?" "Great Master, do you love me?" she cried for the third time.

And then when he was as quiet as ever she writhed up toward him, slid upon his knee, twined her feet about his ankles, curved her arms about his neck and used one of her hands as a

white comb to run through his long ashy beard which she drew all across her neck down to her knees.

"See! I'm clothing myself with wisdom," she cried. "I'm a golden summer butterfly that's been caught in a great old tyrant spider's web that's going to eat me up in this big wild wood without a word to me."

"What do you mean, Vivien, with these pretty tricks of yours?" cried Merlin at last. "What do you want me to give you?"

"What!" said Vivien, smiling saucily, "have you found your tongue at last? Now yesterday you didn't open your lips once except to drink. And then I, with my own lady hands, made a pretty cup and offered you your water kneeling before you and you drank it, but gave me not a word of thanks. And when we stopped at the other spring when you lay with your feet all golden with blossoms from the meadows we passed through you know that I bathed your feet before I bathed my own. But yet no thanks from you. And all through this wild wood, all through this morning when I fondled you, still not a word of thanks."

Then Merlin locked her hand in his and said, "Vivien, have you never seen a wave as it was coming up the beach ready to break? Well, I've been seeing a wave that was ready to break on me. It seemed to me that some dark, tremendous wave was going to come and sweep me away from my hold on the world, away from my fame and my usefulness and my great name. That's why I came away from Arthur's court to make me forget it and feel better. And when I saw you coming after me it seemed to me that you were that wave that was going to roll all over me. But pardon me, now, child, your pretty ways have brightened everything again, and now tell me what you

would like to have from me. For I owe you something three times over, once for neglecting you, twice for the thanks for your goodness to me, and lastly for those dainty gambols of yours. So tell me now, what will you have?''

Vivien smiled mournfully as she answered:

''I've always been afraid that you were not really mine, that you didn't love me truly, that you didn't quite trust me, and now you yourself have owned it. Don't you see, dear love, how this strange mood of yours must make me feel it more than ever? must make me yearn still more to prove that you are mine, must make me wish still more to know that great charm of waving hands and woven footsteps that you told me about, just as a proof that you trust me? If you told that to me I should know that you are mine, and I should have the great proof of your love, because I think that however wise you may be you do not know me yet.''

''I never was less wise, you inquisitive Vivien,'' said Merlin, ''than when I told you about that charm. Why won't you ask me for another boon?''

Then Vivien, as if she were the tenderest hearted little maid that ever lived, burst into tears and said:

''No, master, don't be angry at your little girl. Caress me, let me feel myself forgiven, for I have not the heart to ask for another boon. I don't suppose that you know the old rhyme, 'Trust not at all or all in all?' ''

Then Merlin looked at her and half believed what she said. Her voice was so tender, her face was so fair, her eyes were so sweetly gleaming behind her tears.

''He locked her hand in his again and said, ''If you should know this charm you might sometimes in a wild moment of anger or a mood of overstrained affection when you wanted me

all to yourself or when you were jealous in a sudden fit, you might work it on me.''

"Good!'' cried Vivien, as if she were angry, "I am not trusted. Well, hide it away, hide it, and I shall find it out, and when I've found it beware, look out for Vivien! When you use me so it's a wonder that I can love you at all, and as for jealously, it seems to me this wonderful charm was invented just to make me jealous. I suppose you have a lot of pretty girls whom you have caged here and there all over the world with it.''

Then the great master laughed merrily.

"Long, long years ago,'' he said, "there lived a King in the farthest East of the East. A tawny pirate who had plundered twenty islands or more anchored his boat in the King's port, and in the boat was a woman. For, as he had passed one of the islands the pirates had seen two cities full of men in boats fighting for a woman on the sea; he had pushed up his black boat in among the rest, lightly scattered every one of them and brought her off with half his people killed with arrows. She was a maiden so smooth, so white, so wonderful that a light seemed to come from her as she walked. When the pirate came upon the shore of the Eastern King's island the King asked him for the woman, but he would not give her up. So the King imprisoned the pirate and made the woman his queen.

"All the people adored her, the King's councilmen and all his soldiers, the beasts themselves. The camels knelt down before her unbidden, and the black slaves of the mountains rang her golden ankle bells just to see her smile. So little wonder that the King grew very jealous. He had his horns blown through all the hundred under-kindgdoms which he ruled, telling the people that he wanted a wizard who would

teach him some charm to work upon the queen and make her all his own. To the wizard who could do this he promised a league of mountain land full of golden mines, a province with a hundred miles of coast, a palace and a princess. But all the wizards who failed should be killed and their heads would be hung on the city gates until they mouldered away.

"So there were many, many wizards all through the hundred kingdoms who tried to work the charm, but failed; many wizard heads bleached on the walls, and for weeks a troupe of carrion crows hung like a cloud above the towers of the city gateways. But at last the king's men found a little glassy headed, hairless man who lived alone in a great wilderness and ate nothing but grass. He read only one book, and by always reading had got grated down, filed away and lean, with monstrous eyes and his skin clinging to his bones. But since he never tasted wine or flesh—the wall that separates people from spirits became crystal to him. He could see through it, perceive the spirits as they walked and hear them talking; so he learned their secrets. Often he drew a cloud of rain across a sunny sky, or when there was a wild storm and the pine woods roared he made everything calm again.

"He was the man that was wanted. They dragged him to the king's court by force, he didn't want to go. There he taught the king how to charm the queen so that no one could see her again, and she could see no one except the king as he passed about the palace. She lay as if quite dead and lost to life. But when the king offered the magician his league of golden mines, the province with a hundred miles of sea coast, the palace and the princess, the old man turned away, went back to his wilderness and lived on grass and vanished away. But his book came down to me."

"You have the book!" cried Vivian smiling saucily. "The charm is written in it. Good, take my advice and let me know the secret at once, for if you should hide it away like a puzzle in a chest, if you should put chest upon chest, and lock and padlock each chest thirty times and bury them all away under some vast mound like the heaps of soldiers on the battle-field, still I should hit upon some way of digging it out, of picking it, of opening it and reading the charm. And *then* if I tried it on you who would blame me?"

"You read the book, my pretty Vivien?" cried Merlin. "Well, it's only twenty pages long, but such pages! Every page has a square of text that looks like a blot, the letters no longer than fleas' legs written in a language that has long gone by, and all the borders and margins scribbled, crossed and crammed with notes. You read that book! No one, not even I can read the text, and no one besides me can make out the notes on the margins. I found the charm in the margin. Oh, it is simple enough. Any child might work it and then not be able to undo it. Don't ask me again for it, because even although you would love me too much to try it on me, still you might try it on some of the knights of the Round Table."

"O, you are crueller than any man ever told of in a story, or sung about in song!" cried Vivien. She clapped her hands together and wailed out a shriek. "I'm stabbed to the heart! I only wished that prove to you that were wholly mine, that you loved me and now I'm killed with a word. There's nothing left for me to do except crawl into some hole or cave, and if the wolves won't tear me to pieces, just to weep my life away, killed with unutterable unkindness!"

She paused, turned away, hung her head while the hair uncoiled itself. Then she wept afresh.

The dark wood grew darker with a storm coming over the sky.

Merlin sat thinking quietly and half believed that she was true.

"Come out of the storm," he called over to her," come here into the hollow old oak tree."

Then since she didn't answer, he tried three times to calm her but quite in vain. At last, however, she let herself be conquered, came back to her old perch, and nestled there, half falling from his knees. Gentle Merlin saw the slow tears still standing in her eyes and threw his arms kindly about her. But Vivien unlinked herself at once, rose with her arms crossed upon her bosom and fled away.

"No more love between us two," she cried, "for you do not trust me. Oh, it would have been better if I had died three times over than to have asked you once! Farewell, think gently of me and I will go. But before I leave you let me swear once more that if I've been planning against you in all this, may the dark heavens send one great flash from out the sky to burn me to a cinder!"

Just as she ended a bolt of lightning darted across the sky, and sliced the giant oak tree into a thousand splinters and spikes.

"Oh, Merlin, save me! save me!" cried Vivien, terrified lest the heavens had heard her oath and were going to kill her. And she flew back to his arms. She called him her dear protector, her lord and liege, her seer, her bard, her silver star of evening, her God, her Merlin, the one passionate love of her life, and hugged him close.

All the time overhead the tempest bellowed, the branches snapped above them in the rushing rain. Her glittering eyes

and neck seemed to come and go before Merlin's eyes with the lightning. At last the storm had spent its passion, the wood-

IN THE HOLLOW OF THE OLD OAK TREE LEFT HIM LYING DEAD.

land was all in peace again, and Merlin, overtalked and overworn had told all of the charm and had fallen asleep.

Then in a moment Vivien worked the charm with woven footsteps and waving arms, and in the hollow of the old oak tree left him lying dead to all life, use and fame and name.

"I have made his glory mine! O fool!" she shrieked, and she sprang down through the great forest, the thicket closed about her behind her and all the woods echoed, "Fool!"

BALIN AND BALAN.

King Pellam owed Arthur some tribute money so Arthur told three of his knights to go see about it and collect it for him.

"Very well," said one of the knights, "but listen, on the way to King Pellam's country, near Camelot, there are two strange knights sitting beside a fountain. They challenge and overthrow every knight that passes. Shall I stop to fight them as we go by and send them back to you?"

Arthur laughed, "No, don't stop for anything; let them wait until they can find some one stronger themselves."

With that the three men left. But after they had gone Arthur, who loved a good fight himself, started away early one morning for the fountain side of Camelot. On its right hand he saw the knight Balin sitting under an alder tree, with his horse beside him, and on the left hand under a poplar tree with his horse at his side sat the knight Balan.

"Fair sirs," cried Arthur, "why are you sitting here?"

"For the sake of glory," they answered. "We're stronger than all Arthur's court. We've proved that because we easily overthrow every knight that comes by here."

"Well, I'm of Arthur's court, too," replied the king, "although I've never done so much in jousts as in real wars. But see whether you can overthrow me so easily too."

So the two brothers came out boldly and fought with Arthur, but he struck them both lightly down, then softly came away and nobody knew anything about it.

But that evening while Balin and Balan sat very meekly by the bubbling water a spangled messenger came riding by and cried out to them: "Sirs, you are sent for by the King."

So they followed the man back to the court. "Tell me your names," demanded Arthur, "and why do you sit there by the fountain?"

TWO STRANGE KNIGHTS.

"My name is Balin," answered one of the men, "and my brother's name is Balan. Three years ago I struck down one of your slaves whom I heard had spoken ill of me, and you sent me away for a three years' exile. Then I thought that if we would sit by the well and would overcome every knight who passed by you would be a more willing to take me back. But today some man of yours came along and conquered us both. What do you wish with me?"

"Be wiser for falling," Arthur said. "Your chair is in the hall vacant. Take it again and be my knight once more."

So Balin went back into the old hall of the Knights of the Round Table, and they all clashed their cups together drinking his welcome, and sang until all of Arthur's banners of war hanging overhead began to stir as they always did on the battlefield.

Meanwhile the men who had gone to collect the taxes from King Pellam returned.

"Sir King," they cried to Arthur, "We scarcely could see Pellam for the gloom in his hall. That man who used to be one of your roughest and most riotous enemies is now living like a monk in his castle and has all sorts of holy things about him, and says he has given up all matters of the world. He wouldn't even talk about the tribute money and told us that his heir Sir Garlon, attended to his business for him, so we went to Garlon and after a struggle we got it. Then we came away, but as we passed through the deep woods we found one of your knights lying dead, killed by a spear. After we had buried him, we talked with an old woodman who told us that there's a demon of the woods who had probably slain the knight. This demon, he said, was once a man who lived all alone and learned black magic. He hated people so much that when he died he became a fiend. The woodman showed us the cave where he has seen the demon go in and out and where he lives. We saw the print of a horse's hoof, but no more."

"Foully and villainously slain!" cried Arthur thinking of his poor killed knight in the woods. "Who will go hunt this demon of the woods for me?"

"I!" exclaimed Balan, ready to dart instantly away, but first he embraced Balin, saying, "Good brother, hear; don't

let your angry passions conquer you, fight them away. Remember how these knights of the Round Table welcomed you back. Be a loving brother with them and don't imagine that there is hatred among them here any more than there is in heaven itself."

When bad Balan left, Balin set himself to learn how to curb his wildness and become a courteous and manly knight. He always hovered about Lancelot, the pattern knight of all the court, to see how he did, and when he noticed Lancelot's sweet smiles and his little pleasant words that gladdened every knight or churl or child that he passed, Balin sighed like some lame boy who longed to scale a mountain top and could scarcely limp up one hundred feet from the base.

"It's Lancelot's worship of the queen that helps to make him gentle," said he to himself. "If I want to be gentle I must serve and worship lovely Queen Guinevere too. Suppose I ask the King to let me have some token of hers on my shield instead of these pictures of wild beasts with big teeth and grins. Then whenever I see it I'll forget my wild heats and violences."

"What would you like to bear on your shield?" asked the king when Balin spoke to him about his wish.

"The queen's own crown-royal," replied Balin.

Then the queen smiled and turned to Arthur. "The crown is only the shadow of the king," she said, "and this crown is the shadow of that shadow. But let him have it if it will help him out of his violences."

"It's no shadow to me, my queen," cried Balan, "no shadow to me, king. It's a light for me."

So Balin was given the crown to bear on his shield and whenever he looked at it, it seemed to make him feel gentle and patient.

But one morning as he heard Lancelot and the queen talking together on the white walk of lilies that led to Queen Guinevere's bower, all his old passions seemed to come back and filled him

BALIN WAS GIVEN THE CROWN TO WEAR ON HIS SHIELD.

and he darted madly away on his horse, not stopping until he had passed the fount where he had sat with his brother Balan and had dived into the skyless woods beyond. There the gray-headed woodman was hewing away wearily at a branch of a tree.

"Give me your axe, Churl," cried Balin, and with one sharp cut he struck it down.

"Lord!" cried the woodman, "you could kill the devil of this woods if any one can. Just yesterday I saw a flash of him. Some people say that our Sir Garlon has learned black magic too and can ride armed unseen Just look into the demon's cave."

But Balin said the woodman was foolish, and rode off though the glades with a drooping head. He did not notice that on his right a great cavern chasm yawned out of the darkness. Once he heard the mosses beneath him thud and tremble and then the shadow of a spear shot from behind him and ran along the ground. The light of somebody's armor flashed by him and vanished into the woods.

Balin dashed after this but he was so blinded by his rage that he stumbled against a tree, breaking his lance and falling from his horse. He sprang to his feet and darted off again not knowing where he was going until the massy battlements of King Pellam's castle appeared.

"Why do you wear the crown royal on your shield?" Pellam's men asked him as soon as they saw him.

"The fairest and best of ladies living gave it to me," Balin replied, as he stalled his horse and strode across the court to the banquet hall.

"Why do you wear the royal crown?" Sir Garlon asked him as they sat at table.

"The queen whom Lancelot and we all worship as the fairest, best and purest gave it to me to wear," said Balin.

But Sir Galon only hissed at him and made fun of what he said, and Balin reached for a wonderful goblet embossed with a sacred picture to hurl it at Garlon, but the thought of the

gentle queen about whom he was talking soothed his temper. The next morning, however, in the court Sir Garlon mocked him again and Balin's face grew black with anger. He tore out his sword from its shield and crying out fiercely, "Ha! I'll make a ghost of you!" struck Garlon hard on the helmet.

The blade flew and splintered into six parts which clinked upon the stones below while Garlon reeled slowly backward and fell. Balin dragged him by the banneret of his helmet and struck again, but in a minute twenty warriors with pointed lances were making for him from the castle. Balin dashed his fist against the foremost face then dipped through a low doorway out along a glimmering gallery until he saw the open portals of King Pellam's chapel. He slipped inside this and crept behind the door while the others howled passed outside.

Before the golden altar he noticed lying the brightest lance he had ever seen with its point painted red with blood. Seizing it he pushed it out through an open casement, leaned on it and leaped in a half-circle to the ground outside. Running along a path he found his horse, mounted him and scudded away. An arrow whizzed to his right, another to his left and a third over his head while he heard Pellam crying out feebly, "Catch him, catch him! he musn't pollute holy things!"

But Balin quickly dove beneath the tree boughs and raced through miles of thick groves and open meadowland until his good horse, at last wearied and uncertain in his footsteps, stumbled over a fallen oak and threw Balin headlong.

As Balin rose to his feet he looked at the Queen's crown on his shield and then drew the shield from off his neck. "I have shamed you," he cried. "I won't carry you any more," and

he hung it up on a branch and threw himself on the ground in a passionate sleep.

While he slept there the beautiful wicked Vivien came riding by through the woodland alleys with her squire, warbling a song.

"What is this?" she cried as she noticed the shield on the tree, "a shield with a crown upon it. And there's a horse. Where's the rider? Oh! there he is sleeping. Hail royal knight, I'm flying away from a bad king and the knight I was riding with was hurt, and my poor squire isn't of much use in helping me. But you, Sir Prince, will surely guide me to the Warrior King Arthur, the Blameless, to get me some shelter."

"Oh, no, I'll never go to Arthur's court again," cried Balin. "I'm not a prince any more, or a knight. I have brought the Queen's crown to shame."

Then Vivien laughed shrilly, and told Balin a wicked story about the Queen which she just imagined in her wicked mind. But she told it so cunningly and smiled so sunnily as she talked that Balin believed her and he flew into the more passionate rage because he thought he had been deceived in the Queen whom he had worshipped.

He ground his teeth together, sprang up with a yell, tore the shield from the branch and cast it on the ground, drove his heel *into the royal crown*, stamped and trampled upon it until it was all spoiled, then hurled the shield from him out among the forest weeds and cursed the story, the queen and Vivien.

His weird yell had thrilled through the woods where Balan was lurking for his foe. "There! that's the scream of the wood-devil I'm looking for," he thought. "He has killed some knight and trampled on his shield to show his loathing

of our order and the queen. Devil or man, whichever you are, take care of your head!"

With that he made swiftly for his poor brother whom he did

HE DROVE HIS HEEL INTO THE ROYAL CROWN.

not recognize. Sir Balin spoke not a word but snatched the buckler from Vivien's squire, vaulted on his horse and in a moment had clashed with his brother's armor. King Pellam's holy spear reddened with blood as it pricked through Balan's shield to his flesh. Then Balin's horse, wearied to death, rolled back over his rider and crushed him inward and both men fell and swooned away.

"The fools!" cried Vivien to her young squire. "Come, you Sir Chick, loosen their casques and see who they are. They must be rivals for the same woman to fight so hard."

"They are happy," her gentle squire answered, "if they died for love. And Vivien, though you beat me like your dog I would die for you."

"Don't die, Sir Boy," cried Vivien, I'd rather have a live dog than a dead lion. Come away, I don't like to look at them," and she made her palfrey leap off over the fallen oak tree.

Balin was the first to wake from his swoon. As soon as he saw his brother's face he crawled over to his side moaning. Then Balan faintly opened his eyes and seeing who was with him kissed Balin's forehead.

"O Balin," he cried, "why didn't you carry your own shield which I knew, and why did you trample all over this one which bears the queen's own crown which I know?"

So Balin slowly gasped out the whole story of his shield. Then they each said good-night to the other and closed their eyes, locked in each other's arms.

LANCELOT AND ELAINE.

Long before Arthur was crowned king while he was roving one night over the trackless realms of Lyonesse he came upon a glen with a gray boulder and a lake. As he rode up the highway in the misty moonshine he suddenly stepped upon a white skeleton of a man with a crown of diamonds upon its skull. The skull broke off from the body and rolled away into the lake. Arthur alighted, reached down and picked

up the crown and set it on his head murmuring to himself, "*You too shall be king some day,*" for the skeleton was the bones of a king who had fought with his brother there and been killed.

YOU TOO SHALL BE KING SOME DAY.

When Arthur was crowned he plucked the nine gems out of the crown he had found on the skeleton and showed them to his knights with the words:

"These jewels belong to the whole kingdom for everybody's use and not to the king. Hereafter there is to be joust for one of them every year and in that way in nine years time we will learn who is the mightiest in the kingdom and we will

race with each other to become skilful in the use of arms until at last we shall be able to drive away the heathern horde from the land."

Eight years had now passed and there had been eight jousts. Lancelot had won the diamond every year and intended when he had been victorious in all the jousts, to give the nine gems to the queen. When the ninth year came Arthur proclaimed the tournament for the central and largest diamond to be held at Camelot, where he was holding his court. But the queen became ill as the time for the tour jousts drew near and he asked her whether she was too feeble to go to see Lancelot in the lists.

"Yes, my lord," replied Guinevere, "and you know it," and she looked up languidly to Lancelot who stood near.

Lancelot thinking that she would rather have him near while she was ill than to receive all the diamonds of the crown, said:

"Sir King, that old wound of mine is not quite healed so I can hardly ride in my saddle.''

So the king went, excused Lancelot, and rode away alone to the lists while Lancelot remained, but as soon as Arthur was gone the *queen told Lancelot that he ought by all means go too and fight.*

"But how can I go now," replied Lancelot, "after what I have said to the king."

"I will tell you what to do," said Gunievere. "Everybody says that men go down before your spear just because of your great name. They are afraid as soon as you appear and of course, they are conquered. Go in today entirely unknown and win for yourself, then after all is over the king will be pleased with you for being so clever."

Lancelot quickly got his horse and leaving the beaten thoroughfare, chose a green path among the downs to take

THE QUEEN TOLD LANCELOT THAT HE OUGHT BY ALL MEANS FIGHT

him to the lists. It was a new road to him however and he lost his way and did not know where to go until at last he came upon a faintly traced pathway that led to the castle of Astolat far away on a hill. He went thither, blew the horn at the gate where *a dumb, wrinkled old man came to let him in.* In the castle court he met the lord of Astolat with his two

young sons, Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine and behind them the lily maiden Elaine, Astolat's daughter. They were jesting and laughing as they came.

A WRINKLED OLD MAN CAME AND LET HIM IN.

"Where do you come from, my guest, and what is your name?" asked Astolat. "By your state and presence I would guess you to be the chief of Arthur's court, for I have seen him although the other knights of the Round Table are strangers to me."

Lancelot, Arthur's chief knight replied, "I am of Arthur's court and I am known, and my shield which I have happened to bring with me, is known too. But as I am going to joust

for the diamond at Camelot as a stranger do not ask me my name. After it is over you shall know me and my shield. If you have some blank shield around, or one with a strange device, pray lend it to me."

"Here is Torre's," the Lord of Astolat replied. "He was hurt in his first tilt and so his shield is blank enough, God knows. You can have his."

"Yes," added Sir Torre simply, "since I can't use it you may have it,"

His father laughed. "Fie, Churl, is that an answer for a noble knight? You must pardon him, but Lavaine, my younger boy, is so full of life he will ride in the lists, joust for the diamond, win and bring it in one hour to set upon his sister's golden hair and make her three times as wilful as before."

"Oh, no, good father! don't shame me before this noble knight. It was all a joke. Elaine dreamed that some one had put the diamond into her hand and it was so slippery it dropped into a pool of water. Then I told her that if I fought and won it for her she must keep it safer than that. But it was all in fun. However, if you'll give me your leave, I'll ride to Camelot with this noble knight. I shall not win but I'll do my best to win."

Lancelot smiled a moment. "If you'll give me the pleasure of your company over the downs where I lost myself I'll be glad to have you as a friend and guide. You shall win the diamond if you can and then give it to your sister if you wish."

"Such diamonds are for queens and not for simple little girls," said Sir Torre.

Elaine flushed at this and Lancelot said, "If beautiful things

are for beautiful people this maiden may wear as fine jewels as there are in the world.''

Then the lily maid lifted her eyes and thought that Lancelot was the greatest man that had ever lived. She loved his bruised and bronzed face seamed across with an old sword-cut.

They took the pet knight of Arthur's court into the rude hall of Astolat where they entertained him with their best meats, wines and minstrel melodies. They told him about the dumb old man at the gate, how ten years ago he had warned Astolat of the heathen fighters coming, and how they had all escaped to the woods and lived in a boatman's hut by the river while the old man had been caught and had his tongue cut off.

''Those were dull days,'' said the Lord of Astolat, ''until Arthur came and drove the heathen away.''

''O, great Lord!'' cried Lavaine to Lancelot, ''you fought in those glorious wars with Arthur. Tell us about them!''

So Lancelot told him all about the fight all day long at the white mouth of the river Glenn, the four loud battles on the shore of Duglas where the glorious king wore on his cuirass an emerald carved into Our Lady's head. ''On the mount of Badon,'' he said, ''I saw him charge at the head of all of his Round Table and break the heathen hosts. Afterward he stood on a heap of the killed, all red, from his spurs to the plumes of his helmet, with their blood, and he cried to me: 'They are broken! they are broken!' In this heathen war the fire of God filled him, I never saw anyone like him, there is no greater leader.''

''Except yourself,'' thought the lily maid Elaine. All through the night she saw his dark, splendid face living before

her eyes and early in the morning she arose as if to bid good-bye to Lavaine, stole step after step down the long tower stairs and passed out to the court where Lancelot was smoothing the glossy shoulders of his horse. She drew nearer and stood in the dewy light, studying his face as though it was a god. He had never dreamed she was so beautiful.

"FAIR LORD," SAID ELAINE.

"Fair lord," said Elaine, "I don't know your name but I believe it is the noblest himself of them all. Will you wear a token of me at the tournament today?"

"No, pretty lady," said he," for I've never worn a token of any woman in the lists; as everyone who knows me knows."

"Then by wearing mine you'll be less likely to be found out this time."

"That's true, my child, well, I'll wear it. Fetch it out to me. What is it?"

"A red sleeve bordered with pearls," replied Elaine, and she went in and brought it out to him.

Then he wound it round his helmet and said he had never before done so much for any girl in the world. The blood sprang to Elaine's face as he said that, and filled her with

delight, although she grew all the paler as Lavaine came out and handed Sir Torre's shield to Lancelot. Lancelot gave his own shield to Elaine saying, "Do me this favor, child, keep my shield for me until I come back."

"It's a favor to me," she replied smiling, "I'll be your squire."

"Come, Lily Maid," cried Lavaine, "you'll be a lily maid in earnest if you don't get to bed and have some sleep," and he kissed her good-bye.

Lancelot kissed her hand as they moved away. She watched them at the gateway until their sparkling arms dipped below the downs, then climbed up to her tower with the shield and there she studied it and mused over it every day.

Meanwhile Lancelot and Lavaine passed far over the long downs until they reached an old hermit who lived in a white rock. Here they spent the night. The next morning as they rode away Lancelot said, "Listen to me, but keep what I say a secret, you're riding with Lancelot of the Lake."

"The great Lancelot?" stammered Lavaine, catching his breath with surprise. "There is only one other great man to see, and that is Britain's king of kings, Arthur. And he's going to be at the tournament, too."

As soon as they reached the lists in the meadows by Camelot, Lancelot pointed out the king who, as he sat in the peopled gallery was very easy to recognize because of his five dragons. A golden dragon clung to his crown, another writhed down his robe while two others in gilded carved wood-work formed the arms of his chair. The canopy above him blazed with the last big diamond.

"You call me great," cried Lancelot, "I'm not great, there's the man"

Lavaine gaped at Arthur as if he were something miraculous. Then the trumpets blew. The two sides, those who held the lists and those who attacked them, set their lances in rest, then struck their spurs, moved out suddenly and shocked in the center of the field. The ground shook and there was a low thunder of arms. Lancelot waited a little until he saw which was the weaker side, then sprang into the fight with them. In those days of his glory, whomever he struck he overthrew, whether they were kings, dukes, earls, counts or barons. But that day in the field some of his relatives were holding the lists who did not know him and who could not bear the idea that any stranger knight should out do the feats of their own Lancelot.

"Who is this?" one of them asked, "Isn't it Lancelot?"

"When has Lancelot ever worn a lady's token?" the others replied.

"Who is it then?" they cried, furious to guard the name of Lancelot. They pricked their steeds and moving all together bore down upon him like a wild wave that upsets a ship. One spear lamed Lancelot's charger and another pierced through Lancelot's side, snapped there and stuck. Lavaine now did splendidly for he brought a famous old knight down by Lancelot's side. Lancelot in the meantime rose to his feet in all his agony and by a sort of miracle as it seemed to those who were on his side, drove all his opponents back to the barrier. Then the trumpet blew and proclaimed that the knight who wore the scarlet sleeve with pearls was victor.

"Go up and get your diamond," his men said to him.

"Don't give me any diamonds," said Lancelot. "My prize is death, I'll leave and don't follow"

Then he vanished into the poplar grove where he told Lavaine to draw out the lance head.

"I'm afraid you'll die, if I do," cried Lavaine.

"I'm dying now with it," said Lancelot, so Lavaine drew it out and Lancelot gave a wonderful shriek and swooned away.

Then the old hermit came out, carried him into the white rock and stanched his wound.

Immediately after he had left the field the men of his side went to the king and said that the knight who had won the day had left without receiving his prize.

"Such a knight as that must not go uncared for," said the king. "Gawain, ride out and find him and since he didn't come for his diamond we will send it to him. Don't leave your quest until you have him."

Gawain the courteous was a good young knight but he didn't like it that he had to leave the banquet and the king's side to look for a stranger knight, so he mounted his horse rather crossly. He rode all round the country to every place except the right one, poplar grove, and at last very late reached the Castle of Astolat.

"What news from Camelot?" cried Elaine as soon as she saw him, "What about the knight with the red sleeve?"

"He won."

"I knew it," she said.

"But he left the jousts wounded in his side."

Then Elaine almost swooned away. When the Lord of Astolat came out and heard about Gawain's quest, "Stay with us, noble prince," said he. "For the knight was here and left his shield with us, so he will certainly come back or send for it. Besides my son is with him."

Gawain thought he would have a pleasant time with Elaine so he stayed. But Elaine rebelled against his pretty love-making and asked him why he neglected the king's quest and why he didn't ask to see the knight's shield."

"I've lost my quest in the light of your blue eyes," said Gawain, "but let me see the shield. "Ah! the king was right!" he cried out when Elaine showed it to him." "It was our Lancelot."

"I was right too," Elaine said merrily, "for I dreamed that my knight was the greatest of them all."

"And suppose that I dreamed that you love this greatest knight?" returned Gawain.

"What do I know?" Elaine answered simply. "I don't know whether I know what love is, but I do know that if I do not love him there isn't another man whom I can love."

"Yes, you love him well," said Gawain. "And I suppose you know just where your greatest knight is hidden, so let me leave my quest with you. If you love him it will be sweet to you to give him the diamond and if he loves you it will be sweet to him to receive it from you, while even if he doesn't love you, a diamond is always a diamond. Farewell a thousand times. If he loves you I may see you at court after while."

Then Gawain lightly kissed her hand as he laid the diamond in it, and, wearied of his quest, leaped on his horse and carrolling a love-ballad airilyrode away to the court where it was soon buzzed abroad that a maid of Astolat loved Lancelot and that Lancelot loved a maid of Astolat.

The maid meanwhile crept up to her father one day and received his leave to take the diamond to Sir Lancelot. Sir Torre went with her to the gates of Camelot where they saw Lavaine capering about on a horse.

"Lavaine!" she cried, "how is it with my lord Sir Lancelot?" and she told him about the diamond. Then Sir Torre went on into the city while Lavaine guided Elaine to the hermit's cave. As she saw her handsome knight on the floor, a sort of skeleton of himself, she gave a little tender dolorous cry.

"Your prize, the diamond, sent you by the king," said she, as she put it into his hand and explained how she had received it from Gawain. Then he kissed her as a father would kiss a dear little daughter and she went back to the dim, rich city of Camelot for the night. But the next morning she was back in the cave, and day after day she came, caring for him more mildly, tenderly and kindly than any mother could with a child, until at last the old hermit said she had nursed him back to life, then all three rode back together one morning to Astolat where Lancelot asked Elaine to tell him the dearest wish of her heart so that he could grant it to her. Elaine turned as pale as a ghost when he first spoke but at last one day she told him. She said she wanted him to love her, she wanted to be his wife.

"If I had chosen to wed," Lancelot replied, slowly, "I would have been married long before this. But now I shall never marry, sweet Elaine."

"No, no," cried Elaine, "it won't matter if I can't be your wife, if I can only go with you always and go round the world with you and serve you."

But Lancelot said that would be a poor way for him to requite the love and kindness her father and brothers had shown him. "Noble maid," he went on, "this is only the first flash of love with you. After awhile you will smile at yourself about it when you find a knight who is fitter for you to marry and not three times older than you as I am, and then

I will give you broad lands and territories even to a half of my kingdom across the seas and I'll always be ready to fight for you in your troubles. I'll do this, dear girl, but more I cannot."

"Of all this I care for nothing," Elaine said growing deathly pale and falling in a swoon.

That evening Lancelot sent for his shield from the tower where Elaine sat with it, and as his horse's hoofs clattered off upon the stone of the highway she looked down from her tower, but he did not glance back.

After that Elaine dreamed her time sadly away in the tower and only wished to she could die. She begged her father to send for the priest to confess her and asked Lavaine to write a letter for her to Lancelot. Then she arranged it that when she died the dumb old man at the gate was to take her in the barge down the river to the king's palace. Eleven days later this was done. Elaine was dressed like a little sleeping queen and floated along the stream with her letter in one hand and a lily in the other.

That day Lancelot was with the queen and as he looked out of the casement upon the river he saw the barge hung with rich black samite, the dumb old man and the lily maid of Astolat gliding up to the palace door.

"What is it?" cried everybody streaming round. "A pale fairy queen come to take Arthur to fairy land?"

Then the king bade meek Sir Percival and pure Sir Galahad carry her reverently into the hall where the fine Gawain came and wondered at her and Lancelot came and mused over her, and the queen came and pitied her. But King Arthur spied a letter, opened it and read it aloud to all the lords and ladies. It was Elaine's goodbye to Lancelot.

Then Sir Lancelot told them everything about Elaine and how he had promised to give her his lands and riches when she should be ready to marry some knight of her own age. The

A PALE FAIRY QUEEN CAME TO TAKE ARTHUR TO FAIRY LAND.

king said that he should see that she was buried very grandly. So they had a procession with all the pomp of a queen, with gorgeous ceremonies, mass and rolling music while all the Order of the Round Table followed her to the tomb. Then they laid the shield of Lancelot at her feet and put a lily in her hand.

THE HOLY GRAIL.

One day a new monk came into the abbey beyond Camelot. There was something about him different from all the other monks there. He was so polished and clever that old Ambrosious who had lived in the old monastery for fifty years and had never seen a bit of the world guessed in a minute that the new brother had come from King Arthur's court. And one windy April morning as Ambrosious stood under the yew tree with this gentle monk he asked him why he left the Knights of the Round Table.

"THE HOLY GRAIL," CRIED AMBROSIOUS.

Then Sir Percival answered:

"It was the sweet vision of the Holy Grail."

"The Holy Grail," cried Ambrosious. "Heaven knows I don't know much, but what is that, the phantom of a cup that comes and goes?"

"No, no," said Percival, "what phantom do you mean? It's the cup that our Lord drank from at his sad last supper, and after he died Joseph of Aramathea brought it to Glastonbury at Christmas time, and there it stayed a while and every one who

looked at it or touched it was healed of their sicknesses. But the times grew so wicked that the cup was caught up into heaven where nobody could see it.''

''Yes, I remember reading in our old books,'' said Ambrosious, ''how Joseph built a lonely little church at Glastonbury on the marsh, but that was long ago. Who first saw the vision of the Holy Grail to-day?''

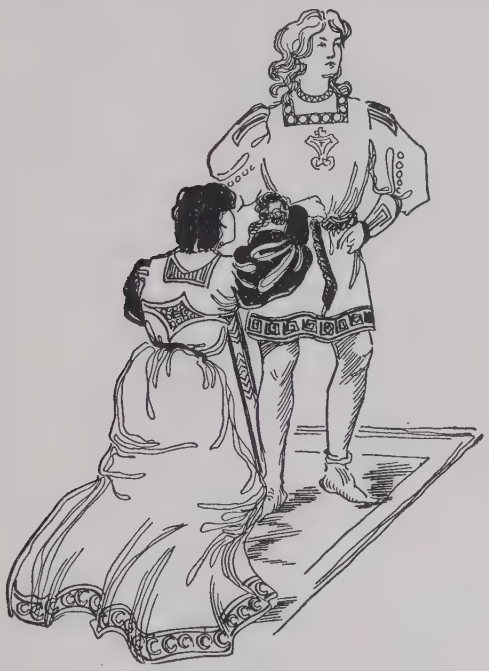
''A woman,'' said Sir Percival, ''a nun, my sister who was a holy maid if ever there was one. The old man to whom she used to tell her sins (or what she called her sins), often spoke to her about the legend of the Holy Grail which had been handed down through six people, each of them a hundred years old, from the Lord's time. And when Arthur made the order of the Round Table and all hearts became clean and pure for a time this old man thought surely the Holy Grail would come back again. 'O Christ!' he used to say to my sister, 'if only it would come back and help all the world of its wickedness!' And then my sister asked him whether it might come to her by prayer and fasting.

'' 'Perhaps,' said the father, 'for your heart is as pure as snow.'

''So she prayed and fasted until the sun shone and the wind blew through her and one day she sent for me. Her eyes were so beautiful with the light of holiness that I did not know them.

'' 'Sweet Brother,' she said, 'I have seen the Holy Grail. I heard a sound like a silver horn but sweeter than any music we can make, and then a cold silver beam of light streamed in through my cell, and down the beam stole the Holy Grail, rose red and throbbing as if it were alive. All the walls of my cell grew rosy red with quivering rosy colors. Then the music faded away, the Holy Grail vanished and the colors died

out in the darkness. So now we know the Holy Thing is here again, Brother fast, too, and pray, and tell your brother-knights about it, then perhaps the vision may be seen by you all, and the whole world will be healed.'



MY KNIGHT OF HEAVEN, GO FORTH.

"So I told all the knights and we fasted and prayed for many weeks. Then my sister cut off all her long streaming silken hair which used to fall to her feet and out of it braided a strong sword belt and with silver and crimson thread she wove into it a crimson grail in a silver beam. Then she bound it on our beautiful boy knight, Sir Galahad, and said:

" 'My knight of heaven, go forth, for you shall see what I have seen and far in the spiritual city you will be crowned king.'

Then she sent the deathless passion of her eyes through him and he believed what she said.

"Then came a year of miracles. In our great hall there stood a chair which Merlin had fashioned carved with strange figures like a serpent and in and out among the strange figures ran a scroll of strange letters in a language nobody knew like a serpent. Merlin called it the Seat Perilous, because he said if any one sat in it he would get lost. And Galahad said that if he got lost in it he would save himself. So one summer night Sir Galahad sat down in the chair and all at once there was a cracking of the roofs above us, and a blast and thunder, and in the thunder there was a cry and in the blast there was a beam of light seven times clearer than the daylight. Down the beam stole the Holy Grail all covered over with a luminous cloud. Then it passed away but every knight saw his brother knight's faces in a glory and we all rose and stared at each other until at last I found my voice and swore a vow.

"I swore that because I had not seen the Holy Grail behind the cloud I would ride away a year and a day in quest of it until I could see it as my sister saw it. Galahad swore too, and good Sir Bors, and Lancelot and many others, knights, and Gawain louder than all the rest.

"The king was not in the hall that day for he had gone out to help some poor maiden, but as he came back over the plains beyond Camelot he saw the roofs rolling in smoke and thought that his wonderfully dear, beautiful hall which Merlin had built for him so wonderfully was afire. So he rode fast and rushed into the tumult of knights and asked me what it all meant.

"'Woe is me!' cried the king when I told him. 'Had I been here you would not have sworn the vows.'

"'My king,' I answered boldly, had you been here you would have sworn the vows yourself.'

"'Yes, yes,' said he, 'are you so bold when you didn't see the Grail? You didn't see farther than the cloud, and what can you expect to see now if you go out into the wilderness?'

"'No, no, Lord, I didn't see the Grail, I heard the sound, I saw the light and since I didn't see the holy thing I swore the vow that I would follow it until I did see.'

"'Then he asked us, knight by knight, whether we had seen it and each one said, 'No, no, Lord, that was why we swore our vows,' but suddenly Galahad called out, 'But I saw the Holy Grail, Sir Arthur, and heard the cry, "O Galahad, follow me:"'"

"Ah, Galahad, Galahad,' said the king, 'the vision is for such as you and for your holy nun but not for these. Are you all Galahads or all Percivals? No, no, you are just men with the strength to right the wrongs and violences of the land. But now since one has seen, all the blind want to see. However, since you have made the vow, go. But oh, how often the distressed people of the kingdom will come into the hall for you to help them and all your chairs will be vacant while you are out chasing a fire in the quagmire! Many of you, yes, most of you will never come back again! But come to-morrow before you go, let us have one more day of field sports so that before you go I can rejoice in the unbroken strength of the Order I have made.'

"So the next day there was the greatest tournament that Camelot had ever seen, and Galahad and I, with a strength which we had received from the vision, overthrew so many knights that all the people cheered hotly for Sir Galahad and Sir Percival. The next morning all the rich balconies along

the streets of Camelot were laden with ladies and showers of flowers fell over us as we passed out and men and boys astride lions and dragons, griffins and swans at the street corners, called us all by name and cried, 'God Speed!' while many lords and ladies wept. Then we came down to the gate of The Three Queens and there each one went on his own way.

"I was feeling glad over my victories in the lists and thought the sky never looked so blue nor the earth so green. All my blood danced within me for I knew that I would see the Holy Grail. But after a while I thought of the dark warning of the king. I looked about and saw that I was quite alone in a sandy thorny place, and I thought I would die of thirst. Then I came to a deep lawn with a flowing brook and apple trees overhanging it. But while I was drinking of the water and eating of the apples they all turned to dust, and I was alone and thirsty again in among the sands and thorns. Next I saw a woman spinning beside a beautiful house. She rose to greet me and stretched out her arms to welcome me into her house to rest, but as soon as I touched her she fell to dust, and the house turned into a shed with a dead baby inside, and then it fell to dust too.

"Then I rode on and found a big hill and on the top was a walled city, the spires with incredible pinnacles reaching up to the sky, and at the gateway there was a crowd of people who cried out to me:

"Welcome, Percival, you mightiest and purest of men!"

"But when I reached the top there was no one there. I passed through to the ruined old city and found only one person a very, very old man. 'Where is the crowd who called out to me?' I asked him.

"He could scarcely speak, but he gasped out, 'Where are you from and who are you?' and then fell to dust.

NEXT I SAW A WOMAN SPINNING.

"Then I was so unhappy I cried. I felt as though even if I should see the Holy Grail itself and touched it it would crumble into dust. From there I passed down into a deep valley, as

low down as the city was high up, where I found a chapel with a hermit in a hermitage near by. I told him about all these phantoms.

"'You haven't true humility,' he said, 'which is the mother of all virtue. You haven't lost yourself to find yourself as Galahad did.'

"Just as he ended suddenly Sir Galahad shone before us in silver armor. He laid his lance beside the chapel door and we all went in and knelt in prayer. Then my thirst was quenched. But when the mass was burned I saw only the holy elements while Galahad saw the Holy Grail come down upon the shrine.

"'The Holy Grail,' he said, 'has always been at my side ever since we came away, fainter in the daytime, but blood-red at night. In its strength I have overcome evil customs wherever I have gone, and have passed through Pagan lands and clashed with Pagan hordes and broken them down everywhere. But the time is very near now when I shall go into the spiritual city far away where some one will crown me king. Come with me for you will see the Holy Grail in a vision when I go.'

"At the close of the day I started away with him. We came to a hill which only a man could climb, scarred all over with a hundred frozen streams, and when we reached the top there was a wild storm. Galahad's armor flashed and darkened again every instant with quick, thick lightnings which struck the dead old tree trunks on every side until at last they blazed into a fire. At the base was a great black swamp partly whitened with bones of dead men. A chain of bridges lead across it to the great sea, and Galahad crossed them, one after the other, but each one burned away as soon as he had passed over so that I had to stay behind. When he reached the great sea the Holy

Grail hung over his head in a brilliant cloud. Then a boat came swiftly by and when the sky brightened again with the lightning I could see him floating away, either in a boat with full sails or a winged creature which was flying, I couldn't tell which. Above him hung the Holy Grail rosy red without the cloud. I had seen the holy thing at last. When I saw Sir Galahad again he looked like a silver star in the sky, and beyond the star was the spiritual city with all her spires and gateways in a glory like one pearl, no larger than a pearl. From the star a rosy red sparkle from the Grail shot across to the city. But while I looked a flood of rain came down in torrents, and how I ever came away I don't know, but anyway at the dawn of the next day I had reached the little chapel again. There I got my horse from the hermit and rode back to the gates of Camelot.

"Just once I met one of the other knights. That was one night when the full moon was rising and the pelican of Sir Bors' casque made a shadow on it. I spurred on my horse, hailed him and we were both very glad to see each other.

" 'Where is Sir Lancelot,' he asked. 'Have you seen him? Once he dashed across me very madly, maddening his horse. When I asked him why he rode so hotly on a holy quest he shouted, 'Don't keep me, I was a sluggard, and now I'm going fast for there's a lion in the way.' Then he vanished. When I saw how mad he was I felt very sad for I love him, and I cared no more whether I saw the Holy Grail, or not; but I rode on until I came to the loneliest parts of the country where some magicians told me I followed a mocking fire. This vexed me and when the people saw that I quarrelled with their priests they bound me and put me into a cell of stones. I lay there for hours until one night a miracle happened. One

of the stones slipped away without any one touching it or any wind blowing. Through the gap it made I saw the

ACROSS THE SEVEN STARS THE SWEET GRAIL GLIDED PAST.

seven clear stars which we have always called the stars of the Round Table and across the seven stars the sweet Grail glided past. Close after a clap of thunder pealed. Then a maiden came to me in secret and loosed me and let me go.'

"Sir Bors and I rode along together and when we reached the city our horses stumbled over heaps of ruined bits of houses that fell as they trod along the streets. At last brought us to Arthur's hall.

"As we came in we saw Arthur sitting on his throne with just a tenth of the knights who had gone out on the quest of the Holy Grail standing before him, wasted and worn, also the knights who had stayed at home. When he saw me he rose and said he was glad to see me back, that he had been worrying about me because of the fierce gale that had made havoc through the town and shaken even the new strong hall and half wrenched the statue Merlin made for him.

" 'But the quest,' the king went on, 'have you seen the cup that Joseph brought long ago to Glastonbury?'

"Then when I told him all that you have been hearing just now and how I was going to give up the tournament and tilt and pass into the quiet of the life of the monk, he answered not a word, but turning quickly to Gawain asked,

" 'Gawain, was this quest for you?'

" 'No, Lord,' replied Gawain, 'not for such as I. I talked with a saintly old man about that and he made me very sure that it wasn't for me. I was very tired of it. But I found a silk pavilion in the field with a lot of merry girls in it, then this gale tore it off from the tenting pin and blew my merry maidens all about with a great deal of discomfort. If it hadn't been for that storm my twelve months and a day would have passed very pleasantly for me.'

"Then Arthur turned to Sir Bors, who had pushed across the throng at once to Lancelot's side, caught him by the hand and held it there half hidden beside him until the king spied them.

"'Hail, Bors, if ever a true and loyal man could see the Grail you have seen it,' cried Arthur.

"'Don't ask me about it,' replied Sir Bors with tears in his eyes 'I may not speak about it; I saw it.'

"The others spoke only about the perils of their storm, and then it was Lancelot's turn. Perhaps Arthur kept his best for the last.

"'My Lancelot,' said the king, 'our Strongest, has the quest availed for you?'

"'Our strongest, O King!' groaned Lancelot and as he paused I thought I saw a dying fire of madness in his eyes. 'O King, my friend, a sin lived in me that was so strange that everything pure, noble and knightly in me twined and clung around it until the good and the poisonous in me grew together, and when your knights swore to make the quest I swore only in the hope that could I see or touch the Holy Grail they might be pulled apart. Then I spoke to a holy saint who said that if they could not be plucked apart my quest would be all in vain. So I vowed to him that I would do just as he told me, and while I was out trying to tear them away from each other my old madness came back to me and whipped me off into waste fields far away.

"There I was beaten down by little knights whom at one time I would have frightened away just by the shadow of my spear. From there I rode over to the sea-shore where such a blast of wind began to blow that you could not hear the waves even although they were heaped up in mountains and drove the sea like a cataract, while the sand on the beach swept by like a river. A boat, half-swallowed by the seafoam, was moored to the shore by a chain. I said to myself that I

would embark in the boat and lose myself and wash away my sin in the great sea.

"For seven days I rode around over the dreary water and on the seventh night I felt the boat striking ground. In front of me rose the enchanted towers of Carbonek, a castle like a rock upon a rock, with portals open to the sea and steps that met the waves. A lion sat on each side of them. I went up the steps and drew my sword. Suddenly flaring their manes the lions stood up like men and gripped me on my shoulders. When I was about to strike them a voice said to me, 'Don't be afraid, or the beasts will tear you to pieces; go on.' Then my sword was dashed violently from my hand and fell. Up into the sounding hall I passed but saw not a bench, table, picture, shield or anything else except the moon over the sea through the oriel window, but I heard a sweet voice as clear as a lark singing in the topmost tower to the east. I climbed up a thousand steps with great pain. It seemed as though I was climbing forever but at last I reached a door with light shining through the crannies and I heard voices singing 'Glory and joy and honor to our Lord and the Holy Vessel, the Grail.'

" 'Then I madly tried the door, it gave way and through a stormy glare of heat that burned me and made me swoon away I thought I saw the Grail, all veiled with crimson samite and around it great angels, awful shapes and wings and eyes!'

"The long hall was silent after Lancelot was done, until airy Gawain began with a sudden.

" 'O King, my liege, my good friend Percival and your holy nun have driven men mad. By my eyes and ears I swear I'll be deeper than a blue-eyed cat and three times as blind

as any owl at noon-time hereafter to any holy virgins in their ecstasies.'

" 'Gawain,' replied the king, 'don't try to become blinder; you're too blind now to want to see. If a sign really came from heaven Bors, Lancelot and Percival are blessed for they have each seen according to their sight.' "

PELLEAS AND ETTARRE.

When his knights went after the Holy Grail Arthur made many new knights to fill the gaps made by their absence. As he sat in his hall one day at old Caerleon the high doors were softly parted and through these in came a youth, and with him the outer sunshine and the sweet scent of meadows.

"Make me your knight, Sir King!" he cried, "because I know all about everything that belongs to a knight and because I love a maiden.'

This youth was Sir Pelleas-of-the-Isles who had heard that the king had proclaimed a great tournament at Caerleon with a sword for the victor and a golden crown for the victor's sweetheart as the prize. He longed to win them, the circlet for his lady love, the sword for himself.

Just a few days before, while riding across the Forest of Dean to find the king's palace hall at Caerleon, Pelleas had felt the sun beating on his helmet so sharply that he reeled and almost fell from his horse. Then, seeing a hillock near by overgrown with stately beech trees and flowers here and there beneath, he tied his horse to a tree, threw himself down and was very soon lost in sweet dreams about a maiden, not any particular maiden for he had no sweetheart at that time.

But suddenly he was wakened with a sound of chatter and laughing at the outskirts of the grove, and glancing through fern he saw a party of young girls in many colors like the

WAS VERY SOON LOST IN SWEET DREAMS ABOUT A MAIDEN.

clouds at sunset, all of them riding on richly dressed horses. They were all talking together in a hodgepodge, some pointing this way, some that, for they had lost their way.

Pelleas sprang up, loosed his horse and led him into the light.

"Just in time!" cried the lady who seemed to be the leader of the party. "See, our pilot-star! Youth, we are wandering damsels riding armed, as you see, ready to tilt against the

knights at Caerleon, but we've lost our way. To the right? to the left? straight on? forward? backward? which is it? tell us quickly."

Pelleas gazed at her and wondered to himself whether the famous Queen Guinevere herself was as beautiful as this maiden. For her violet eyes, scornful eyes, were large and the bloom on her cheeks was like the rosy dawn. Her beauty made Pelleas timid and when she spoke to him he could not answer but only stammered, for he had come from far away waste islands where besides his sisters, he had scarcely known any women but the tough wives of the islands who made fish nets.

With a slow smile the lady turned round to her companions the smile spreading to them all. For she was Ettarre, a very great lady in her land.

"O, wild man of the woods," she cried, "don't you understand our language, or has heaven given you a beautiful face and no tongue?"

"Lady," he answered, "I just woke from my dreams, and coming out of the gloomy woods I was dazzled by the sudden light, and beg your pardon. But are you going to Caerleon I'm going too. Shall I lead you to the king?"

"Lead," said she.

So through the woods they went together but his tender manner, his awe of her and his bashfulness bothered her. "I've lighted on a fool," she muttered to herself," so raw and yet so stale!"

But since she wished to be crowned the Queen of Beauty in the king's tournament, and since Pelleas looked strong she thought perhaps he would fight for her, so she flattered him and was very pleasant and kind. Her three knights and

maidens were kind to him too, for she was a very great lady and they had to do as she did. When they reached Caerleon before she passed on to her lodgings she took Pelleas by the hand and said:

SHE TOOK PELLEAS BY THE HAND.

"O, how strong your hand is! See; look at my poor little weak one! Will you fight for me and win me the crown, Pelleas, so that I may love you?"

Pelleas' heart danced. "Yes! Yes!" he cried, "and will you love me if I win?"

"Yes, that I will," answered Ettarre laughing and flinging away his hand as she peeped round to her knights and ladies until they all laughed with her.

"O what a happy world!" thought glad Pelleas, "everybody seems happy and I am the happiest of all."

He couldn't sleep that night for joy and on the next day when he was knighted he swore to love one maiden only. As he came away from the king's hall the men who met him all turned around to look at his face, for it flamed with happiness, and at the great banquets which Arthur gave to knights from all parts of the country Pelleas looked the noblest of the noble. For he dreamed that his lady loved him and he knew that he was loved by the king.

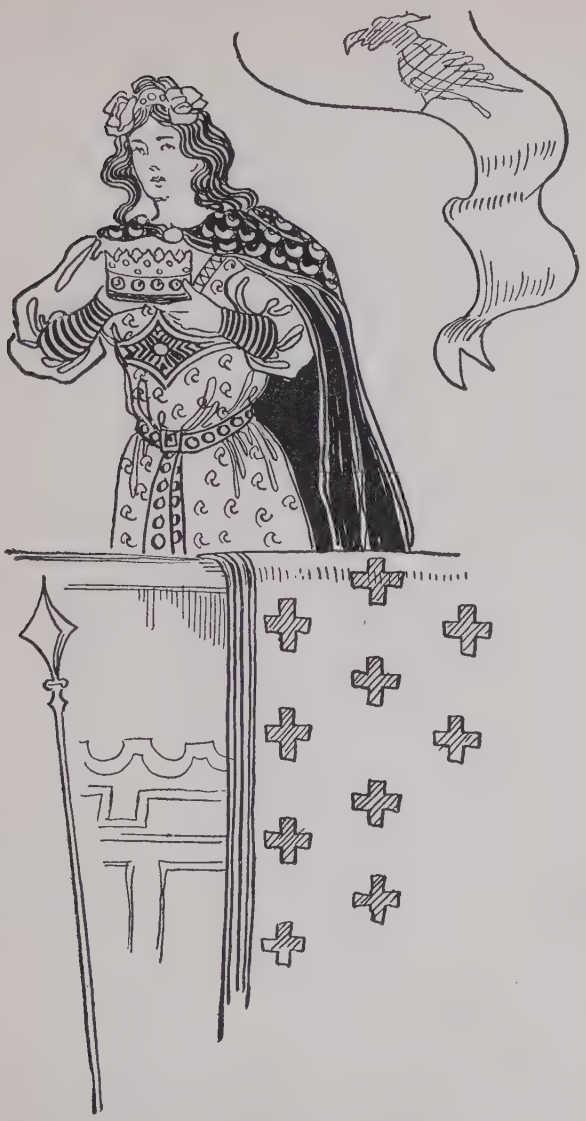
On the morning when the jousts began the first that was called was the tournament of youth. Arthur wanted to keep the older, stronger men out of it so that young Pelleas might win his lady's love as she had promised, and be lord of the tourney. Down by the field along the river Usk where it was held the gilded parapets were crowned with faces and the great tower filled with eyes up to its top. Then the trumpets blew for the tournament to begin.

All day long Sir Pelleas held the field. At the close a shout rang round the galleries as Ettarre caught the gold crown from his lance and crowned herself before all the people. Her eyes sparkled as she looked at him, but that was the last time she was kind to her knight.

She lingered a few days at Caerleon, sunny to all the other people but always frowning at him.

Still when she left for home with her knights and maidens Sir Pelleas followed.

"Damsels," cried she as she saw him coming, "I ought to be ashamed to say it and yet I can't bear that Sir Baby. Keep him back with yourselves. I'd rather have some rough old knight who knows the ways of the world to chatter and joke



ETTARRE CROWNED HERSELF BEFORE ALL THE PEOPLE.

with; so don't let him come near me. Tell him all sorts of baby fables that good mothers tell their little boys, and if he runs off for us—it doesn't matter."

So the young women didn't let him go near Ettarre but made him stay with them, and as soon as they had all passed into Ettarre's castle gate up sprang the drawbridge, down rang the iron grating, and Sir Pelleas was left outside all alone.

"These are only the ways of ladies with their lovers when the ladies want to find out whether the lovers are true or not. Well, she can try me with anything, I'll be true through all."

So he stayed there until dark, then went to a priory not far off and the next morning came back. Every day he did the same whether it rained or shone, armed on his charger, and stayed all the day beneath the walls, although nobody opened the gate for him.

This made Ettarre's scorn turn to anger. She told her three knights to go out and drive him away. But when they came out Pelleas overthrew them all as they dashed upon him one after the other. So they went back inside and he kept his watch as before. This turned Ettarre's anger into hate. As she walked on top of the walls with her three knights about a week later she pointed down to Pelleas and said:

"He haunts me, look, he besieges me! I can't breathe. Strike him down, put my hate into your blows and drive him away from my walls."

So down they went but Pelleas overthrew them all again so Attarre called down from the tower above, "Bind him and bring him in."

Pelleas heard her say this so he did not resist, but let the men bind him and take him into his lady love. "See me, Lady, he said cheerily, "your prisoner, and if you keep me in your

dungeon here I'll be quite content if you'll just let me see your face every day. For I've sworn my vows and you've given me your promise and I know that when you've done proving me you will give me your love and have me for your knight."

But she made fun of his vows and told her knights to put him outside again and "if he isn't a fool to the middle of his bones," said she, "he'll never come back." Then the three knights laughed and thrust him out of the gates.

But a week later Ettarre called them again, "He's watching there yet. He comes just like a dog that's been kicked out of his master's door. Don't you hate him? Go after him, all of you at once, and if you don't kill him bind him as you did before and bring him in."

So the three knights couched their spears all together, three against one, ready to dash upon Pelleas, low down beneath the shadow of the towers.

Gawain passing by on a lonely adventure saw them.

"The villains!" he shouted to Pelleas, "I'll strike for you!"

"No," cried Pelleas, "when one's doing a lady's will one doesn't need any help."

Gawain stood by quivering to fight while the three knights sprang down upon Pelleas, but Pelleas all alone beat the three of them together. Then they rose to their feet, and he stood still while they bound him and took him into their lady.

"You're scarcely fit to touch your victor, you dogs!" she cried to her men, "far less bind him; but take him out as he is and let whoever wants to untie him. Then if he comes again—"

She paused just a minute and Pelleas broke in at once with, "Lady, I loved you and thought you very beautiful, but if you

don't love me don't trouble yourself about it; you wont see me again."

As soon as Pelleas was put outside the gate Gawain sprang forward, loosed his bonds, flung them over the walls and cried out:

"My faith, and why did you let those wretches tie you up so when you were victor of all the jousts?"

"O," said Pelleas, "they were just obeying the wishes of my lady, and her wishes are mine."

Gawain laughed. "Lend me your horse and armor," he said, "and I'll tell her I've killed you. Then she'll let me in just to hear all about it and when I've made her listen I'll tell her all about you, what a great and good fellow you are. Give me three days to melt her and on the third evening I'll bring you golden news."

"Don't betray me," cried Pelleas, as he handed over his horse and all his weapons except his sword. "Aren't you the knight they call 'Light-of-love?' "

"That is just because women are so light," Gawain rejoined, laughing."

Then he rode up to the castle gate, and blew the bugle so musically that all the hidden echoes in the walls rang out.

"Away with you!" cried Ettarre's maidens, running up to the tower window. "Our lady doesn't love you."

"I'm Gawain from Arthur's court," cried Gawain, lifting his vizor so that they could see his face. "I've killed Pelleas whom you hate so. Open the gates and I'll make you merry with my story."

The ladies ran down crying out to Ettarre, "Pelleas is dead! Sir Gawain of Arthur's court has killed him and is blowing the bugle to come in to tell us."

"Let him in," said Ettarre.

Then they opened the gates and Gawain rode inside.

For three days Pelleas wandered all about, doing nothing but thinking of Gawain and Ettarre, and on the third night, when Gawain did not come, he wondered why Gawain lingered with his golden news. At last he rode up to Ettarre's castle, tied his horse outside and walked in through the wide open gates. The court he found all dark and empty, not a light glimmering from anywhere, so he passed out by the back gate, into the large gardens beyond of red and white roses, where he saw three pavilions. In one he found the three knights with their squires, all red with revelling, and all asleep, in the second he saw the girls with their scornful smiles frozen stiff in slumber, and in the third lay Gawain with Ettarre, the golden crown he had won for her at the joust on her forehead, both sleeping.

Pelleas drew back as if he had touched a snake.

"I'll kill them just as they lie," he cried in a passion. "O! to think that any knight could be so false!"

But he was too manly to kill anyone in sleep, so he just laid his sword across their throats and passed out to his horse, crushed his saddle with his thighs, clenched his hands together and groaned.

"I loathe her now just as much as I loved her!" he cried, and dashing his spurs into his horse he bounded out into the darkness and never came back.

Meanwhile Ettarre, feeling the cold sword on her neck, awoke.

"Liar!" she cried to Gawain, as she saw that it was the sword of Pelleas, "you haven't killed Pelleas, for he's been here and could have killed us both just now."

And ever after that, as those who tell the story say, the proud and scornful Ettarre sighed for Pelleas, the one true knight in the world, her only faithful lover, and at last pined away because he never came back.

THE LAST TOURNAMENT.

One day while King Arthur and Sir Lancelot were riding far, far beneath a winding wall of rock they heard the wail of a child.

A half-dead oak tree climbed up the sides of the rock and up in mid-air it held an eagle's nest. Through its branches rushed a rainy wind and through the wind came the voice of a little child. Lancelot sprang up the crag and from the nest at the tree-top he brought down a baby girl. Round her neck was twined a necklace of rubies, wound round and round three times.

Arthur took the baby and gave it to Queen Guinevere, who soon loved it very tenderly and named her "Nestling." But Nestling had caught a terrible cold in her strange little home in the wild eagle's nest and died. And after that whenever the Queen looked at the ruby necklace it made her very sad so she gave it to Arthur and said:

"Take these jewels of our Dead Innocence and make them a prize at a tournament."

"Just as you wish," cried the King," but why don't you wear the diamonds that I found for you in the tarn, which Lancelot won for you at the jousts?"

"Don't you know that they slipped out of my hands the very day that he gave them to me, while I was leaning out of

the window to see Elaine in the barge on the river? But these rubies will bring better luck than that to the lady who gets them, for they didn't come from a dead king's skeleton, but from the body of a sweet baby girl. Perhaps, who knows, the purest of your knights will win them at the jousts for the purest of my ladies."

So the great jousts were proclaimed with trumpets that blew all along the streets of Camelot and out across the faded fields to the farthest towers, and everywhere the knights armed themselves for a day of glory before the king.

But just the day before they were to be held, as King Arthur sat in his great hall, a churl staggered in through the door; his face was all striped with the lashes of a dog whip, his nose was broken, one eye was out, a hand was off and the other hand dangled at his side with shattered fingers.

"My poor Churl," cried the king, full of indignant pity, "what beast or fiend has been after you? Or was it a man who hurt you so?"

"He took them all away," sputtered the churl, "a hundred good ones. It was the Red Knight. He—Lord, I was tending sheep, my pigs, a hundred good ones, and he drove them all off to his tower. And when I said that you were always kind to poor churls like me as well as gentle lords and ladies, he made for me and would have killed me outright if he didn't want me to bring you message and made me swear that I would tell you.

"He said, 'Tell the king that I have made a Round Table of my own in the North, and that whatever his knights swear not to do mine swear that they will do; and tell him his hour has come, and that the heathen are after him, and that his long lance is broken, and that his sword Excalibur is a straw.'"

Then Arthur turned to Sir Kay the Seneschal and said: "Take this churl of mine and tend him very carefully as if he were the son of a king until all his hurts are healed," and as Sir Kay left the hall with the churl the king went on to Lancelot: "The heathen have been quiet for a long, long time, but now they are rising again in the North, and I will go with my younger knights to put them down, so as to make the whole island safe from one shore to the other. And while I go away, you, Sir Lancelot, will sit in my chair to-morrow at the tournament and be the judge there of the field. For why should you anyway care to go in again yourself, when you've already won the nine diamonds for the queen?"

"Very well," replied Lancelot, "if you wish, although it would be better if you would let me go off with the younger knights and you stay here with the others and watch the tournament. But, if not, all is well?"

"Is all really well?" cried the king, "or have I just dreamed that our knights are not quite so true and manly as they used to be and that my noble realm which has been built up by noble deeds and noble vows is going to fall back into beastly roughness and violence again?"

He gathered all the younger Knights of the Round Table together and started away with them down the hilly streets of Camelot, and at the gateway turned sharply North.

The next morning, the day of the Tournament, the Tournament of the Dead Innocence they called it, a wet wind blew. But the streets were hung with white samite, the fountains were filled with wine, and round each fountain twelve little girls, all dressed in purest white sat with the cups of gold and gave drinks to all that passed. The stately galleries were filled with white-robed ladies. Lancelot mounted the steps

to the king's dragon-carved chair, the trumpets blew and the jousts began.

TWELVE LITTLE GIRLS GAVE DRINK TO ALL WHO PASSED.

But Lancelot did not think of the sport before him, he was dreaming over and over again the words of the king about the kingdom, and many rules of the tournament were broken, and he didn't say a word. Once one of the knights, who was overthrown cursed the little baby girl, the dead innocence, and the king, and once one of the knight's helmets became un-

laced and the wicked face of Mordred peeped through like a vermin, but Lancelot didn't see.

After a while a roar of welcome shouted all round the galleries and lists as a new knight came in dressed from his head to his feet in green armor all trimmed with tiny silver deer, with holly berries on his helmet crest. It was Sir Tristram of the Woods who had just crossed over the seas from Brittany. Lancelot had fought with him long ago and conquered him, and now he saw him and longed to fight him again. As many, many knights of the Round Table fell down before the new knight Lancelot gripped the golden dragons on each side of his throne to keep himself in his seat, and groaned with passion. "Craven crests! oh, shame!" he muttered, "the glory of the Round Table is gone."

So Tristram won the jousts and Sir Lancelot gave him the jewels.

"The hands with which you take these rubies are red," he said as he put the necklace in Tristram's hands.

Then the thick rain began to fall, the plumes on the helmets of the knights drooped and the dresses of the ladies were mussed. When they went inside to feast the ladies took off their pure white gowns and robed themselves in all the colors of the rainbow and field flowers, like poppies, blue-bells, kingcups, and one said she was glad the time to wear the pure innocent simple white was over. They grew so loud in their frolics that at last the queen, who was angry that Sir Tristram had won the prize and angry with the lawless youths, broke up the banquet.

The next morning as Sir Tristram stood before the hall little Dagonet, the fool, came dancing along and Sir Tristram threw

his rubies round the little fool's neck as he skipped about like a withered leaf, asking him why he danced.

LITTLE DAGONET SKIPPING AGAIN AND AGAIN.

"It's stupid to dance without music," Tristram said, and picked up his harp and began to twangle a tune on it; but as soon as Sir Tristram began to play Dagonet stopped his dance. "And why don't you go on skipping, Sir Fool?" asked Tristram.

"Because I'd rather skip twenty years to the music of my little brain than skip a minute to the broken music you make."

"And what music have I broken?" cried Sir Tristram. "Arthur the King's music," cried little Dagonet, skipping again and again as Sir Tristram ceased. Then down the city he danced all the way, while Sir Tristram passed out into the lonely avenues of the forests. He rode on toward Lyonesse and the West, thinking of Isolt, the White, whom he loved, and how he would put the rubies round her neck.

Arthur, meanwhile, with his hundred spearmen had gone far, far away, until at last over the countless reeds of marshes and islands he saw a huge tower glaring in the wide-winged sunset of the West. As he drew near he saw that the tower

doors stood open and heard roars of rioting and wicked songs of ruffian men and women.

"Look," cried one of his knights, for there high on a grim dead tree before the tower, a brother of the Round Table was swinging by his neck, his shield flowing with a shower of blood on a branch near by.

All the knights wanted to dash forward and blow the great horn that hung beside the gate, but Arthur waved them back and went himself. He blew so hard that the horn roared until all the grasses of the marshes flared up, and out of the castle gate sallied a knight dressed from tip to toe in blood-red arms, the Red Knight.

"Aren't you the king?" he bellowed, "the king that keeps us all with such strict vows that we can't have any pleasures, a milky-hearted king? Look to your life now!"

Arthur scorned to speak to so vile a man or to fight him with his sword. He simply let the drunkard, stretching out from his horse to strike, fall head-heavy, over from the castle causeway to the swamp below.

Then all the Round Table Knights roared and shouted, leaped down on the fallen man, trampled out his face in the mire, sank his head so that it could not be seen, and, still shouting, sprang through the open doors among the people within. They hurled their swords right and left on men and women, hurled over the tables and the wines and slew and slew until all the rafters rang with yells and all the pavements streamed with blood. Then they set the tower all afire and half the night through it flushed the long low meadows and marshlands and lazily plunging sea with its flames. That was how Arthur made the ways of the island safe from one shore to the other.

Sir Tristram, not many nights after, reached Tintagil, where Isolt, the White, lived in a crown of towers, where she now sat with the low sea-sunset glorying her hair and glossy throat, thinking of him and of Mark, her Cornish lord.

When Tristram's footsteps came grinding up the tower steps she flushed, started out to meet him and threw her white arms about him.

"Not Mark, not Mark!" she cried. "At first your footsteps fluttered me, for Mark steals into his own castle like a cat."

"No, it's I," said Sir Tristram, and don't think about your Mark any more, for he isn't yours any longer.'

"But listen," she cried, "to-day he went away for a three days' hunt, he said, and that means that he may be back in an hour for that's his way. My God, my hate for him is as strong as my love for you. Let me tell you how I sat here one evening thinking of you, one black midsummer night, all alone, dreaming of you, and sometimes speaking your name aloud, when suddenly there Mark stood behind me, for that's his way to steal behind one in the dark.

" 'Tristram has married her!' he hissed out and then this tower shook with such a roar that I swooned away."

"Come," cried Sir Tristram, laughing, "never mind, I'm hungry, give me some meat and wine."

So they ate and drank, talked and laughed about Mark with his long crane-like legs, and Sir Tristram took a harp and sang a song. Then while the last light of the day glimmered away he swung the ruby necklace before Isolt.

"It's the fruit of a magical oak-tree that grew mid air," he cried, "and was won by Sir Tristram as a tourney prize to bring to you."

Flinging the rubies round her neck he had just touched her

jeweled throat with his lips when behind him rose a shadow and a shriek.

"Mark's way!" cried Mark, the Cornish king, and he clove Tristram through the brain.

That very night Arthur came back from the North, and as he climbed up the tower steps to go to the queen, in the dark of the tower something pulled at him. It was little Dagonet.

"Who are you?" said the king.

"I'm little Dagonet, your fool," sobbed the little jester," "and I cry because I can never make you laugh again."

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

One night King Arthur saw Sir Gawain in a dream, and Gawain, who had been killed, shrilly called out to him through the wind:

"Hail King! to-morrow you are going to pass away, and there's a land of rest for you. Farewell!"

But when Arthur told his dream to Sir Bedivere, good old Sir Bedivere replied, "Don't mind what dreams tell you, but get your knights together and go out to the West to meet Sir Modred, who has stirred up against you so many of the knights you love. They all know in their hearts that you are king. Go and conquer them as of old."

So the king took his army by night and pushed upon Modred league after league, until they reached the Western part of Lyonesse where the long mountains ended in the moaning sea. There Modred's men could flee no farther, so on the

waste lands by the barren sea they began that last dim weird battle of the West.

A white chill mist slept over all the land and water so that even Arthur became confused since he could not see which were his friends and which were his foes. Friends killed friends, some saw the faces of old ghosts looking in upon the battle. Spears were splintered, shields were broken, swords clashed, helmets were shattered, men shrieked and looked up to heaven for help but saw only the white, white mists. There were cries for light and moans.

At last toward the close of the day a hush fell over the whole shore; a bitter wind from the North blew the mist aside and the pale king looked across the battlefield. But no one was there only the waves breaking in among the dead faces.

But bold Bedivere said: "'My King! the man who hates you stands there, Modred, the traitor of your house!''

"Don't call this traitor a person of my house," the king replied. "The men of my house are not those who have lived under one roof with me, but those who always call me their king."

With that, Arthur dashed after Modred. Modred struck at the king's helmet, which had grown thin with all his heathen wars. Arthur with his sword Excalibur struck Modred dead, then fell down himself almost killed with the wound through his helmet.

Sir Bedivere lifted him up and carried him to a chapel near by.

"Take my sword, Excalibur," said the King, "and fling it out into the middle of the sea, watch what happens to it and then come back at once and tell me."

"It doesn't seem right to leave you all alone here," said Sir

Bedivere, "when you are wounded and ill, but since you wish me to go, I will, and will do all that you have told me."

He slipped away by zigzag paths, points and jutting rock to the shining level of the sea. There he drew out the sword Excalibur. The winter moon sparkled against its hilt and made it twinkle with its diamond sparks, with myriads of topaz lights and fine jewelry work. Bedivere gazed so long at it that both his eyes were dazzled as he stood, and he wondered whether he ought to throw away so beautiful a thing. At last he decided to hide it away among the water-flags that grew along shore.

"Did you do as I said?" asked the king, when he saw him. "What did you see?"

"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds," said Sir Bedivere, "and the wild water lapping on the rock."

"You are not giving me a true answer," said the king, faint and pale. "It's shameful for men to lie. Quickly go again and as you are true and dear, do just as I bade you. Watch and bring me word."

Then Sir Bedivere went the second time and paced up and down beside the pebbly water, counting the dewey pebbles, but when he saw the wonderful sword he clapped his hands together and cried:

"If I threw that sword away, a precious thing will be lost forever. The King is ill; he does not know what he is doing. His great sword ought to be kept, then in long years hereafter people will look at it at the tournament and they will say: 'This was the great Arthur's sword Excalibur which was made by the lonely lady of the Lake, working in the deep sea for nine years.'"

So the second time he hid Excalibur and strode very slowly back to the king.

"What did you see or what did you hear?" asked Arthur breathing very heavily.

"I heard the water lapping on the rock and the long ripples washing in the reeds."

"Unkind! miserable! untrue! unknightly!" cried Arthur, filled with anger. "I see what you are, for you are the only one left me of all the knights, yet you would betray me for my sword, either to sell it or like a girl, because you love its beauty. Go out now the third time and if you do not throw out my sword Excalibur I'll get up and kill you with my hands."

At this Sir Bedivere sprang up like a flash and ran down leaping lightly over the ridges, plunged into the beds of bulrushes, clutched the sword, wheeled it round strongly and threw it as far as he could.

Excalibur made lightning in the moonlight as it flashed round and round and whirled in an arch, shooting far out to the water. But before it quite dipped into the sea an arm robed in white samite, mystic and wonderful, rose out of the waves, caught it by the hilt, brandished it three times and drew it under.

"Now I can see by your eyes that you have done it!" cried the King. "Speak out; what have you seen or heard?"

"Sir King," cried Sir Bedivere, "I closed my eyes when I picked it up so that I would not be turned from my purpose of throwing it into the water, for I could live three lives, Sir King, and I wouldn't again see such a wonderful thing as your sword. Sir I threw it out with both hands, wheeling it round and when I looked an arm robed in white samite reached up

out of the water and caught it by the hilt, brandished it three times and drew it under."

"Carry me to the shore," said the king,

AN ARM ROBED IN WHITE SAMITE.

So Bedivere lifted him up and walked as swiftly as he could from the ridge, heavily, heavily down to the beach. As they reached the shore they saw a black barge beside the water filled with stately people all dressed in black. Among the people were three queens wearing crowns of gold.

"Put me into the barge," cried Arthur.

So they came to the barge and the three queens held out their hands and took the king.

The tallest and fairest of them held his head upon her lap loosed his shattered helmet and chafed his hands, and moaned tenderly over him.

"Ah, my lord Arthur," cried Sir Bedivere "where shall I go

now? For the old times are past now and the whole Round Table is broken."

"Go and pray," cried the king. "Farewell, for I am going a very long way to the lovely Island-valley of Avilion where it will never hail nor rain nor snow, and where the loud winds never blow. It lies in deep meadows, beautiful with lawns and fruit trees and flowery glens."

Then the barge set sail and oar, and moved away from the shore.

"The king is gone!" groaned Bedivere.

He walked away from the shore and climbed up to the highest peaks and ridges about him and looked far, far away. And from far away out beyond the world he thought he heard sounds from a beautiful city as if every one in it all together were welcoming a great King who had just come back from his wars

END.

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